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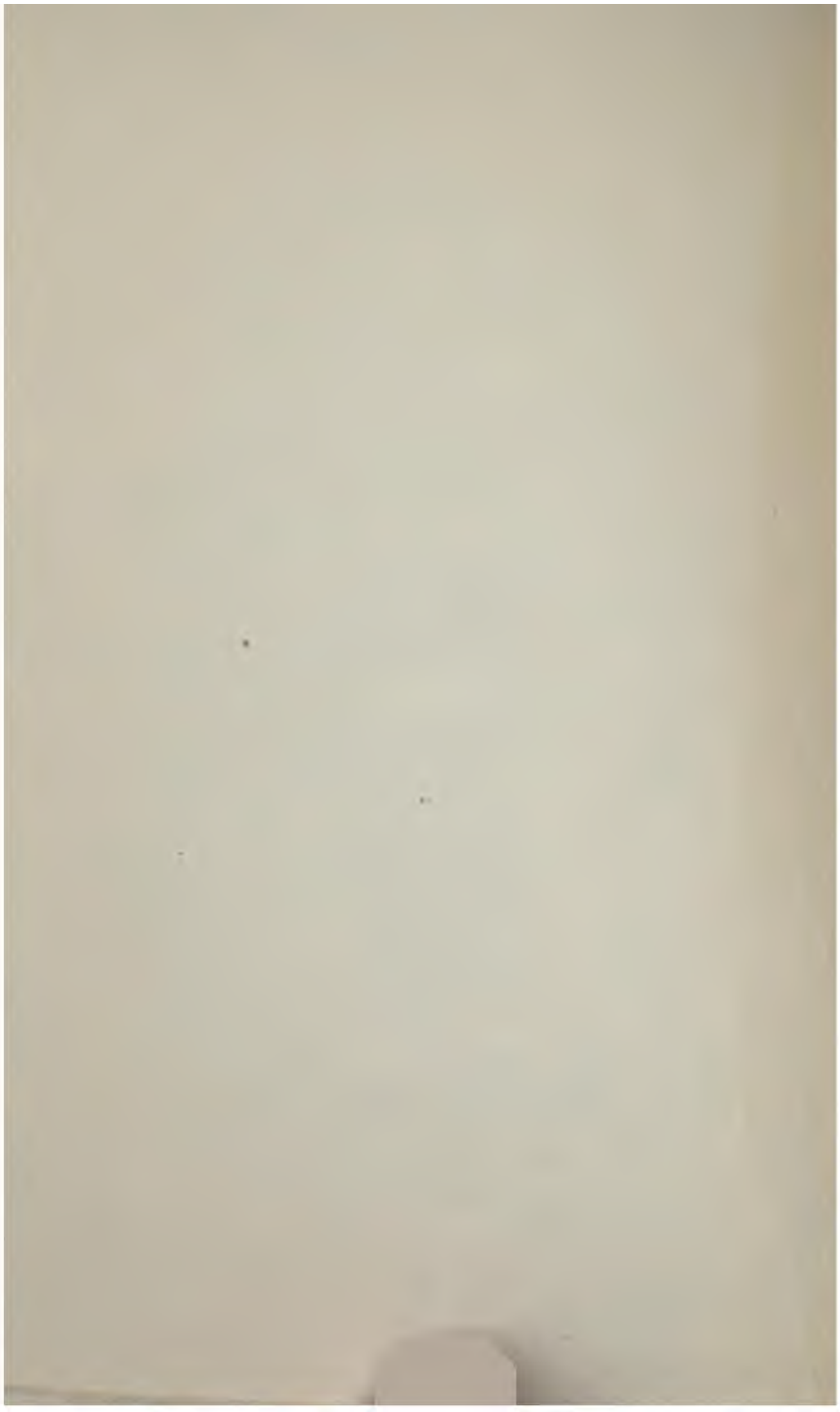

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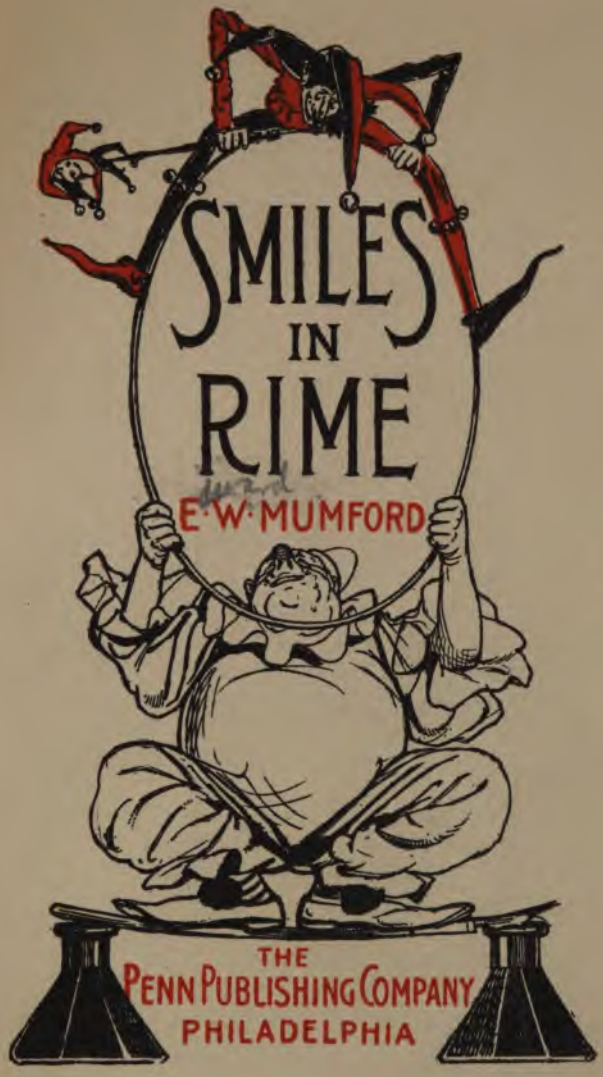
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IN
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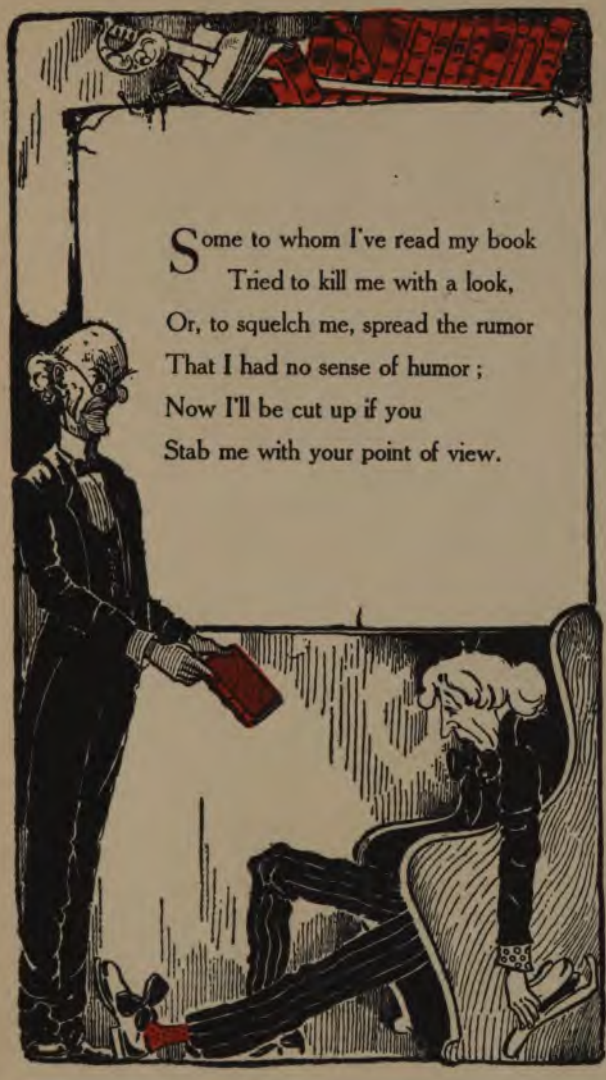


Some to whom I've read my book
Tried to kill me with a look,
Or, to squelch me, spread the rumor
That I had no sense of humor;
Now I'll be cut up if you
Stab me with your point of view.

138469

PURELY PROSE

¶ It is quite possible that some Gentle Reader will find in these pages the Little Thing he wrote when Grandma died, or his Lines to Brother Henry upon the burning of the latter's soap factory. He may even notice in this case that his name is not attached to the verses. This is not because I have the slightest feeling about the name, but because I don't know it. Otherwise I would cheerfully print his picture in two colors at the head of the first column, next to reading matter, and urge everybody to use no other. But things quotable have a fashion of floating around with no names attached, and it sometimes happens that people wake up in the night and chuckle at our verses when only the grocer remembers whether we spelled the name with two t's or one.

¶ About half these verses have not been printed before. The others have been gathered from many private scrapbooks and other sources. Some of them are old favorites. Miss Wells' "Tutor" is one, and Edward Lear's "Old Man with a Beard" is another. One of Lear's rimes and one of Gilbert's appear to have been twisted a little in transmission; but they still seem to make nonsense, so perhaps no harm is done.

¶ With these apologies the book is offered to all earnest seekers after truth. The point of each rime is elucidated by a diagram, executed with scholarly exactness and two kinds of ink, a feature which it is hoped may be found helpful where the treatise is used in the Training of the Young. An edition for infant classes, in words of one syllable, will be issued when the demand becomes imperative.

A PRIZE FOR NONSENSE RIMERS

¶ On every second page of the book is the title and first line of a nonsense rime or humorous poem. The publishers of the book offer a prize of One Hundred Dollars for the best original stanza completing one of these rimes. The following conditions must be strictly observed.

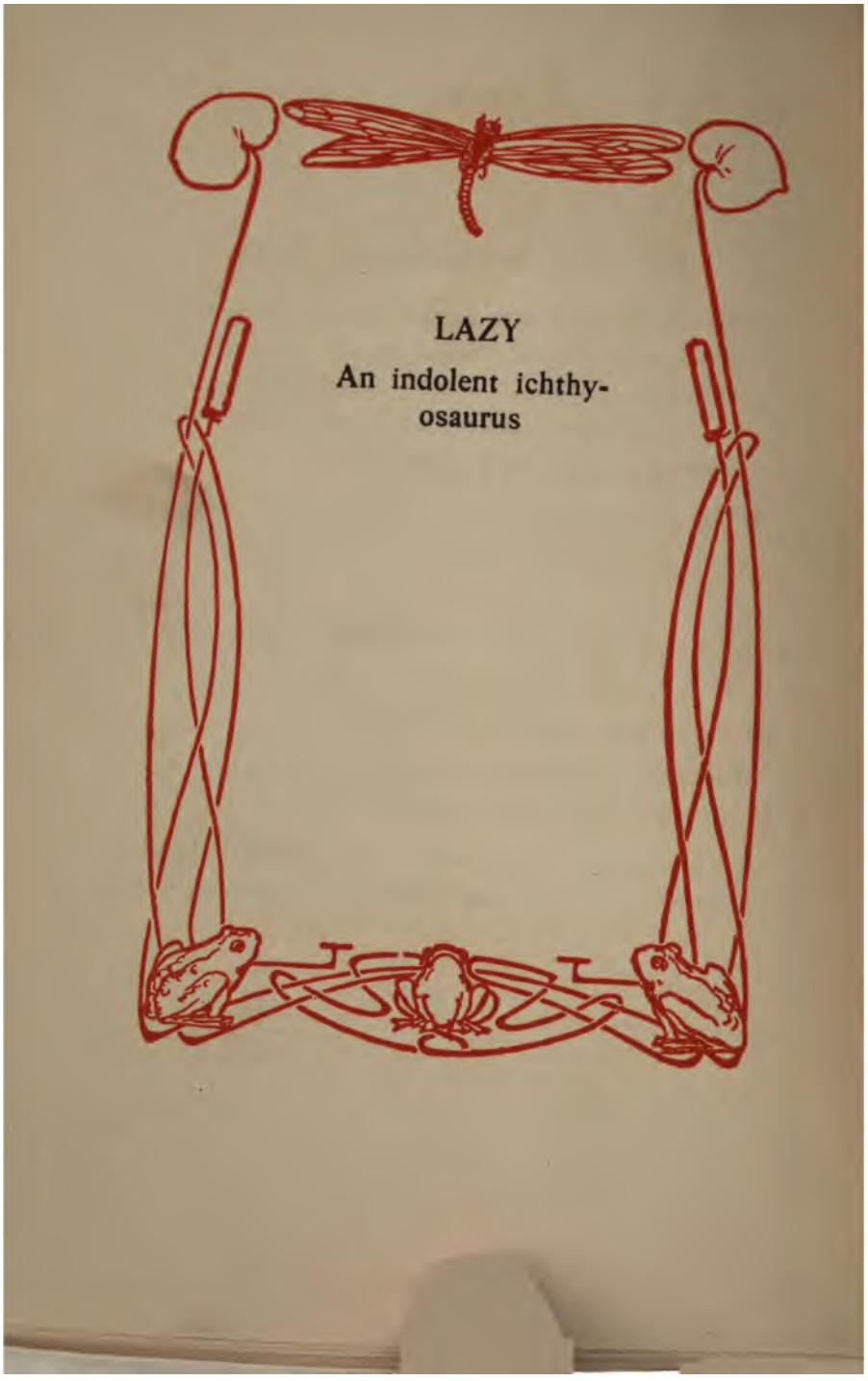
¶ The verses submitted must be accompanied by the author's name and address, written on the coupon which will be found inside the back cover of the book.

¶ No coupon may be accompanied by more than three rimes or poems.

¶ No rime or poem may have more than six lines.

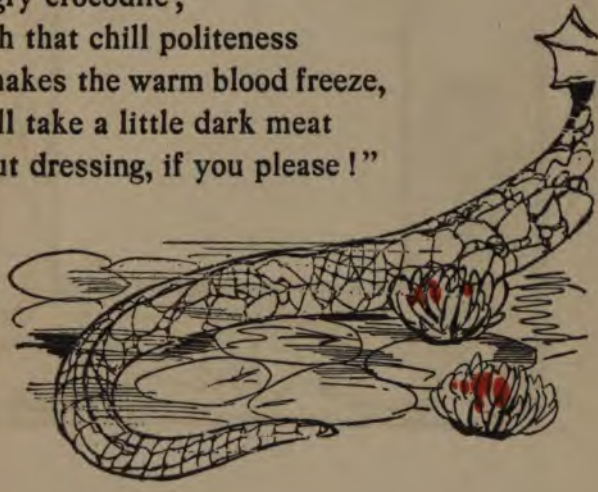
¶ All verses submitted must reach the Penn Publishing Company, 923 Arch Street, Philadelphia, by June 1, 1905.

¶ The publishers cannot promise to answer questions about the competition, all necessary information being given above.


LAZY
An indolent ichthy-
osaurus

NO DRESSING, PLEASE

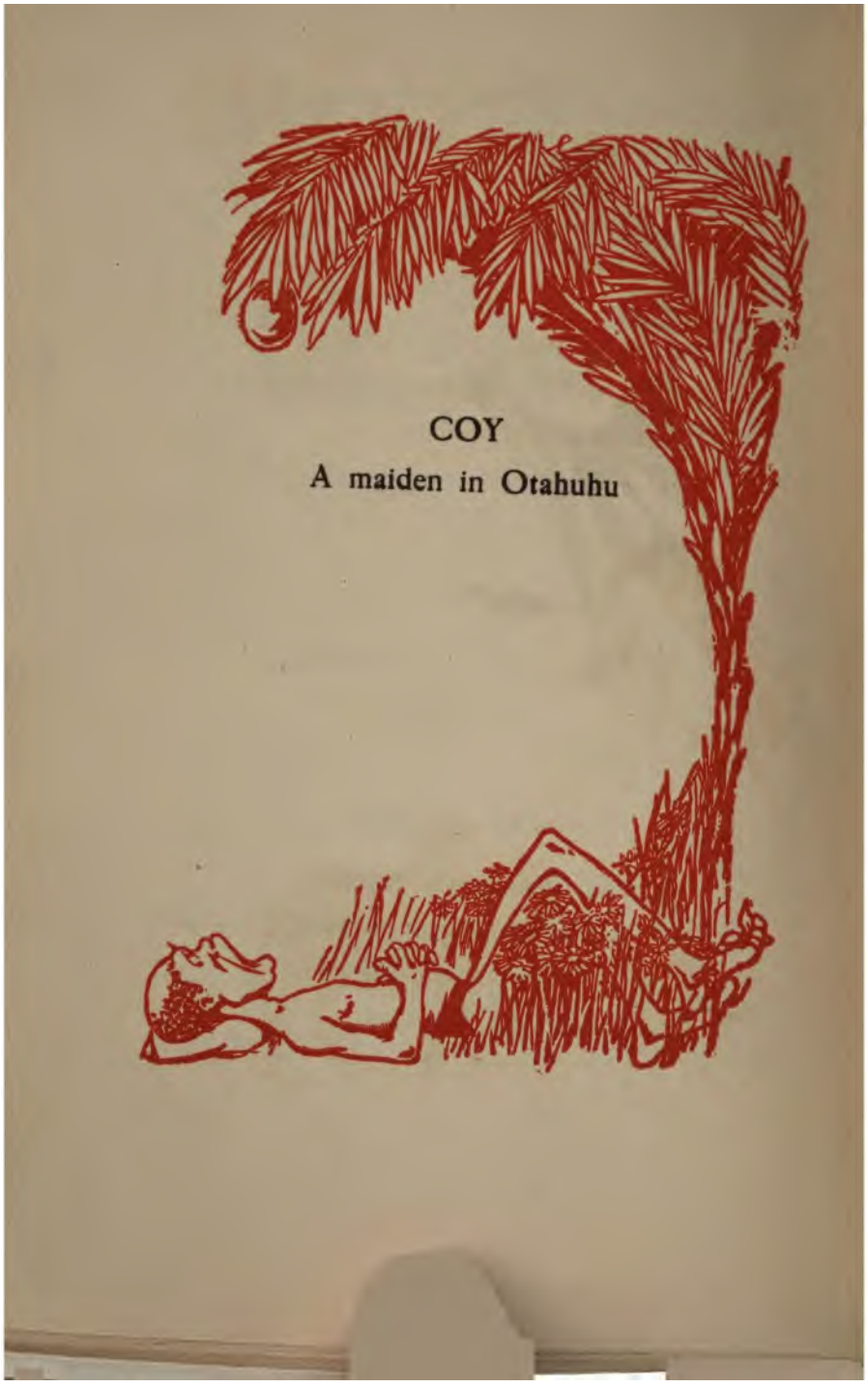
Unto a little African,
A-swimming in the Nile,
Appeared, quite unexpectedly,
A hungry crocodile;
And, with that chill politeness
That makes the warm blood freeze,
Said, "I'll take a little dark meat
Without dressing, if you please!"



REGRETS
I wish that I were
not so good

POOR CROPS

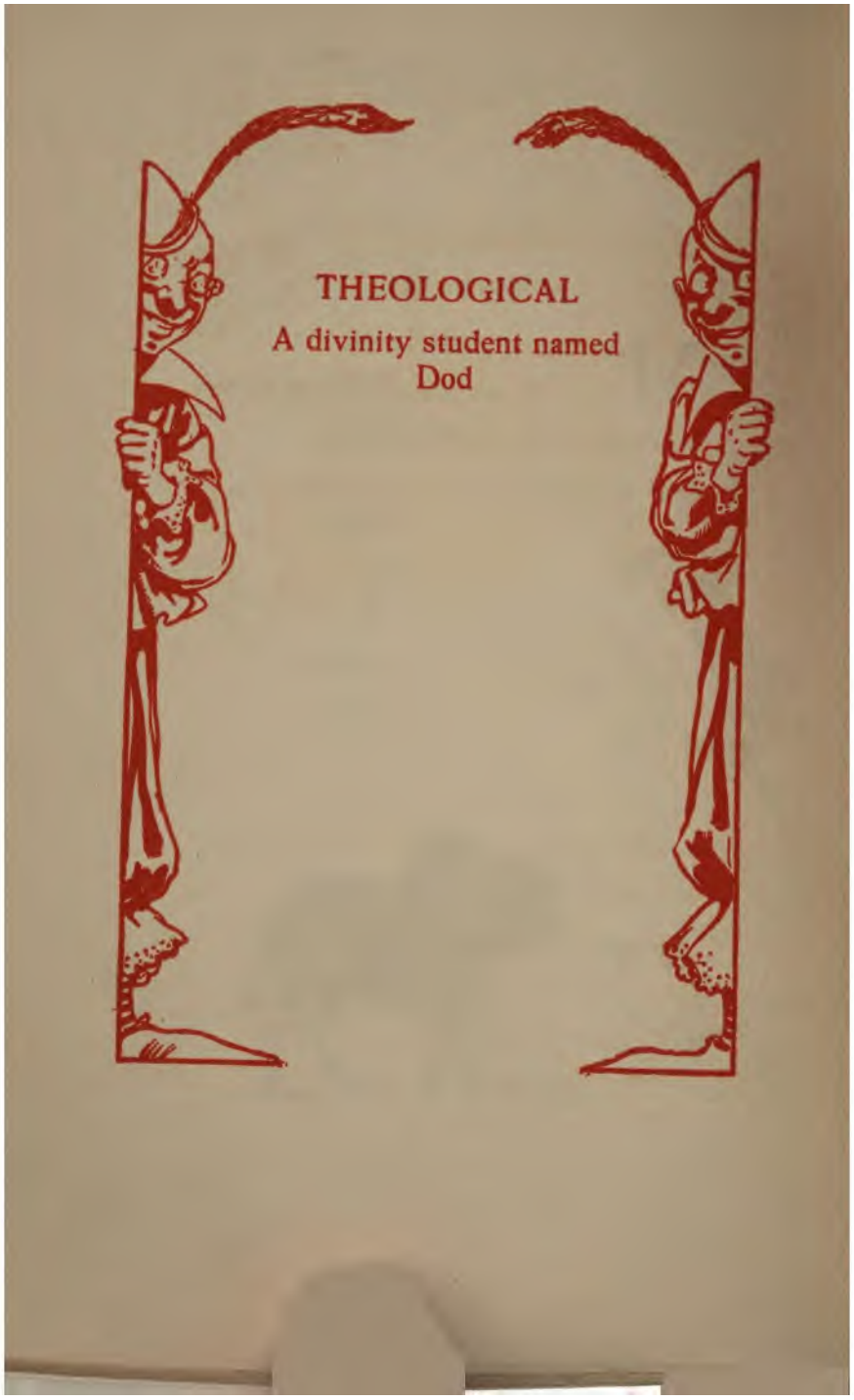
Amos Dusenberry Ranter,
Though a most successful planter,
Never harvested an acre—
Amos was an undertaker.


COY
A maiden in Otahuhu

SOILED

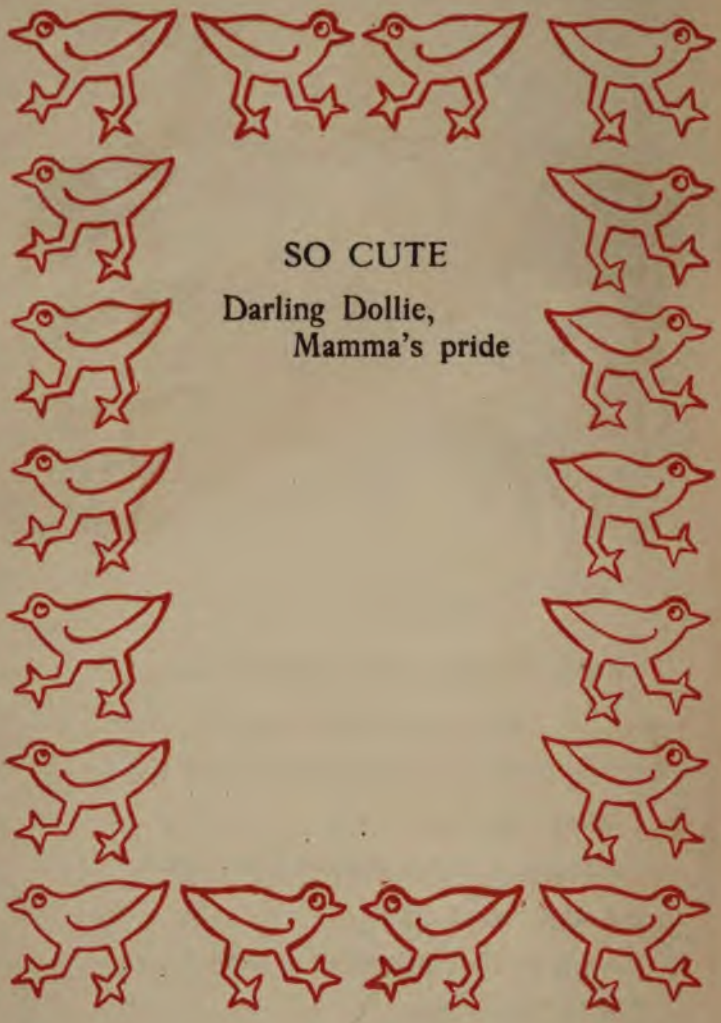
Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
She took it out to Pittsburgh,
And now—

look
at
the
blamed
thing !


THEOLOGICAL
A divinity student named
Dod

WHAT IT WAS

There was a sign upon the fence,
The sign read, "Paint,"
And every one who passed that way—
Sinner and saint—
Put out a finger, touched the fence,
And onward sped;
And, as they wiped their finger tips,
"It is," they said.

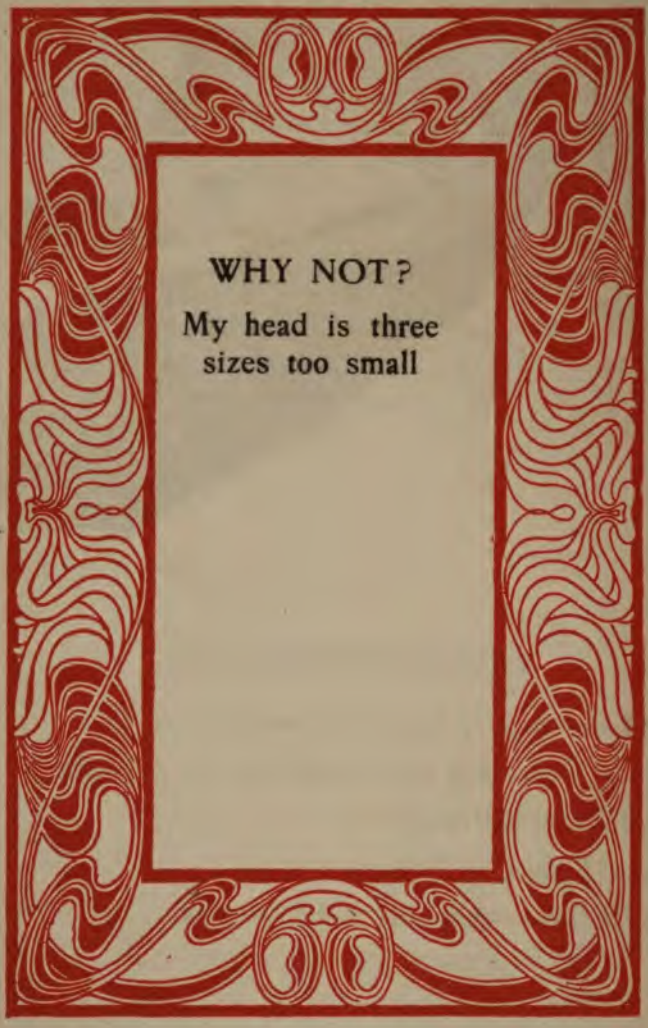


SO CUTE

Darling Dollie,
Mamma's pride

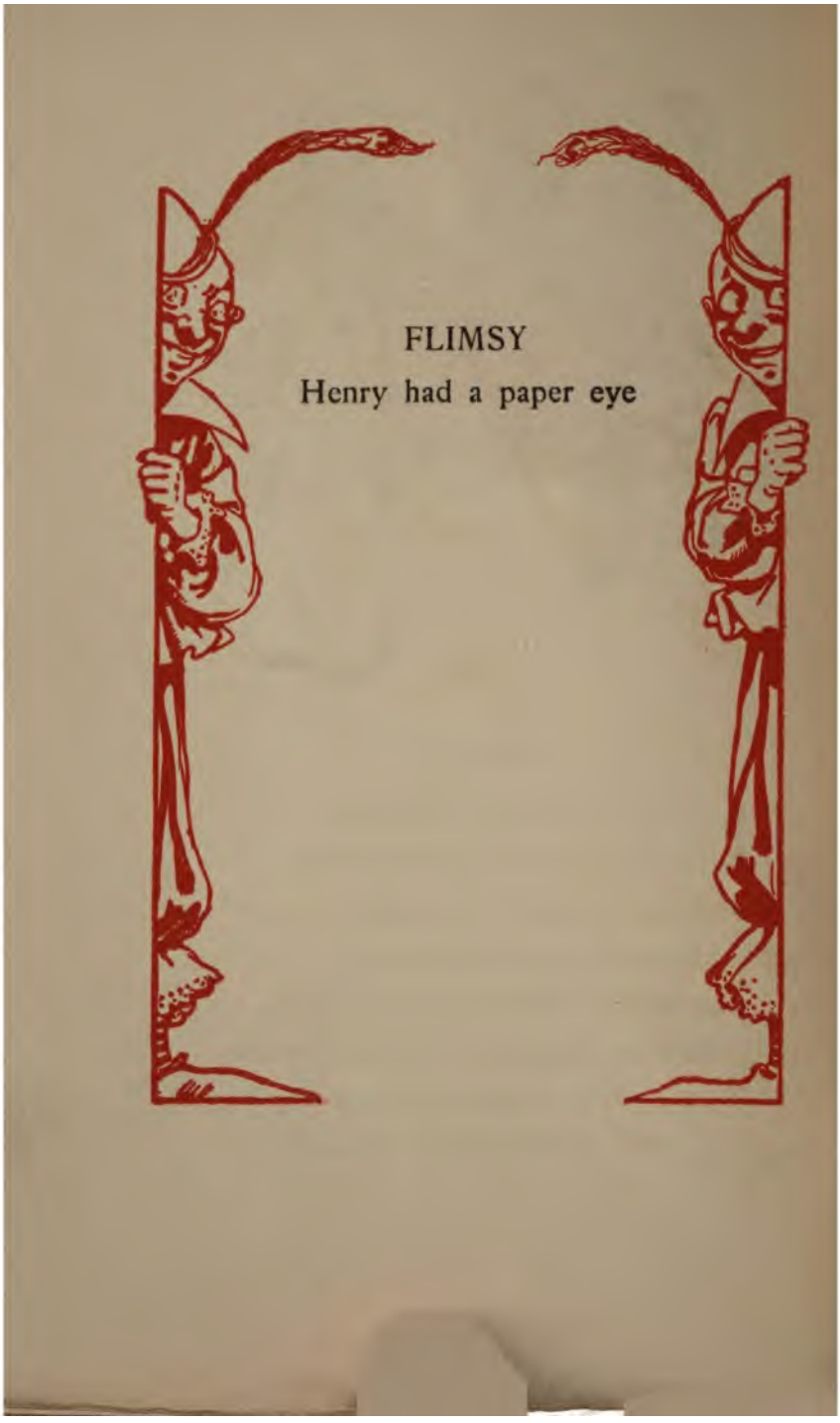
GOOD INTENTIONS

There was a fair maid from Ostend,
Who said she'd hold out to the end;
But when half way over
From Calais to Dover
She'd done what she didn't intend.


WHY NOT?
My head is three
sizes too small

GAMEY

"I think," said Dr. Probenkill,
"We'll wait a little longer,
And not cut into him until
He gets a little stronger."
The patient raised his head again,
And murmured, "Tell me, please,
What do you fellows take me for—
A hunk of Roquefort cheese?"

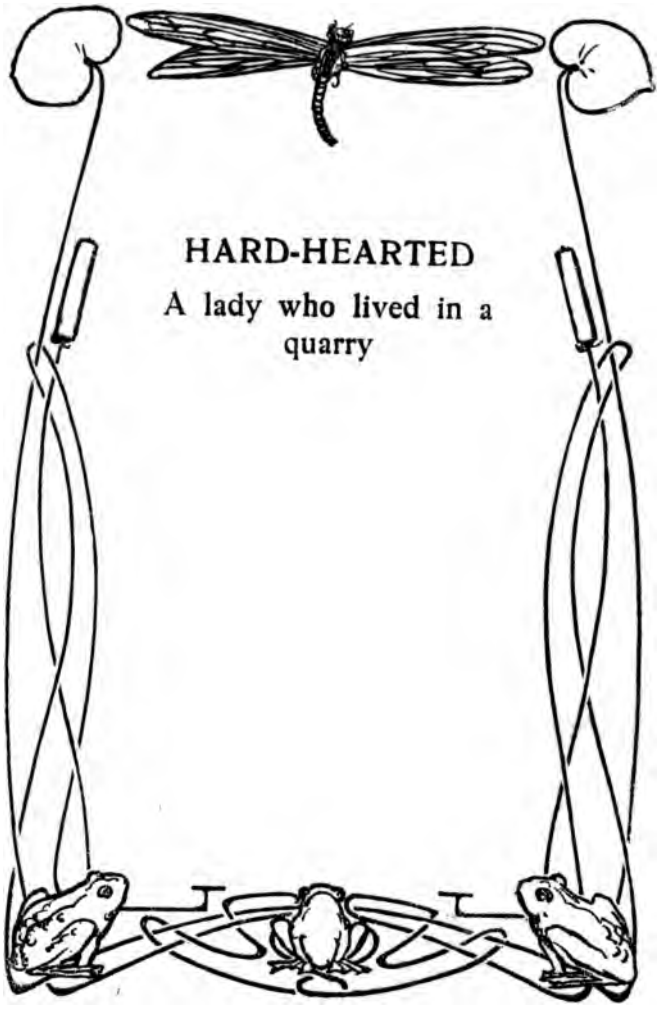


FLIMSY

Henry had a paper eye

THE LIMIT

A gallant young man from the west
Wooed a maid in the east with much zest;
So hard did he press her
To make her say "Yes, sir"—
He broke three cigars in his vest.



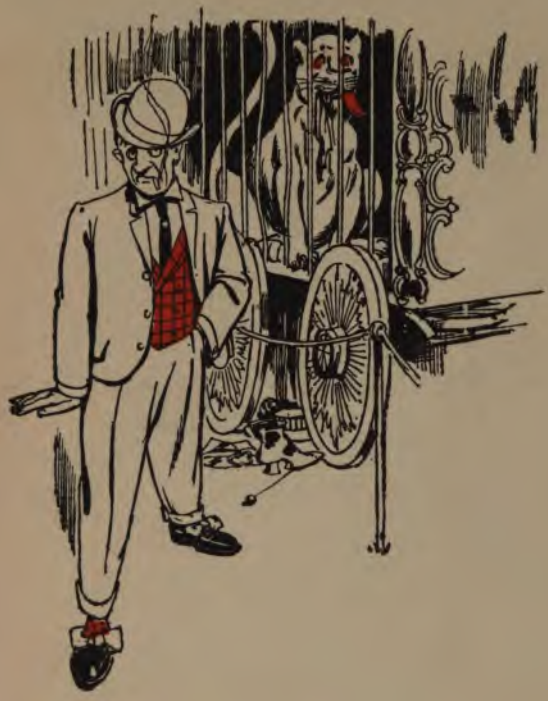
HARD-HEARTED

A lady who lived in a quarry

ONE BELOW

Little Willy had a mirror,
And he licked the back all off,
Vainly thinking, in his terror,
It would cure the whooping-cough.
At the fun'ral said his mother
To her neighbor, Mrs. Brown,
"'Twas a chilly day for Willy
When the mercury went down."

MISPLACED
CONFIDENCE
When Arabella
lent her ear



CARELESS

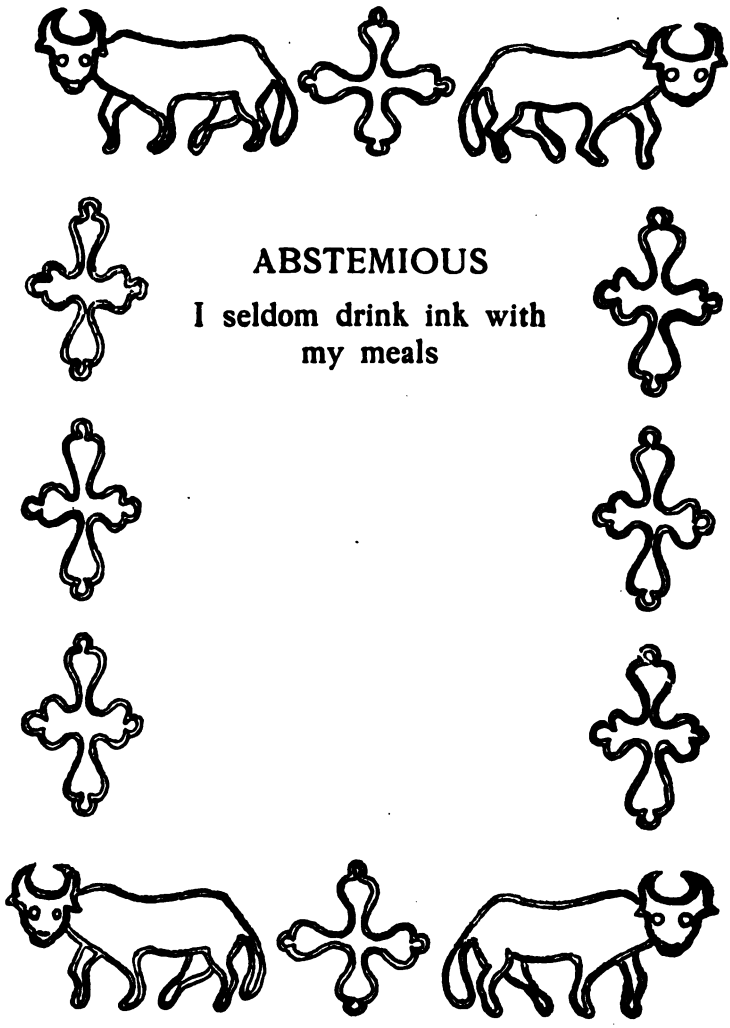
A sporty young fellow named Joe
Took his girl to an animal show;
When the jaguar ate her,
He murmured, "I hate her!—
She never knows how far to go."

HER LITTLE GAME

A wily young widow named Weede

DENSE

Upon his chair a pin we set,
While Teacher lingered
in the hall.
We all enjoyed the joke—and
yet
He couldn't see the point at all.

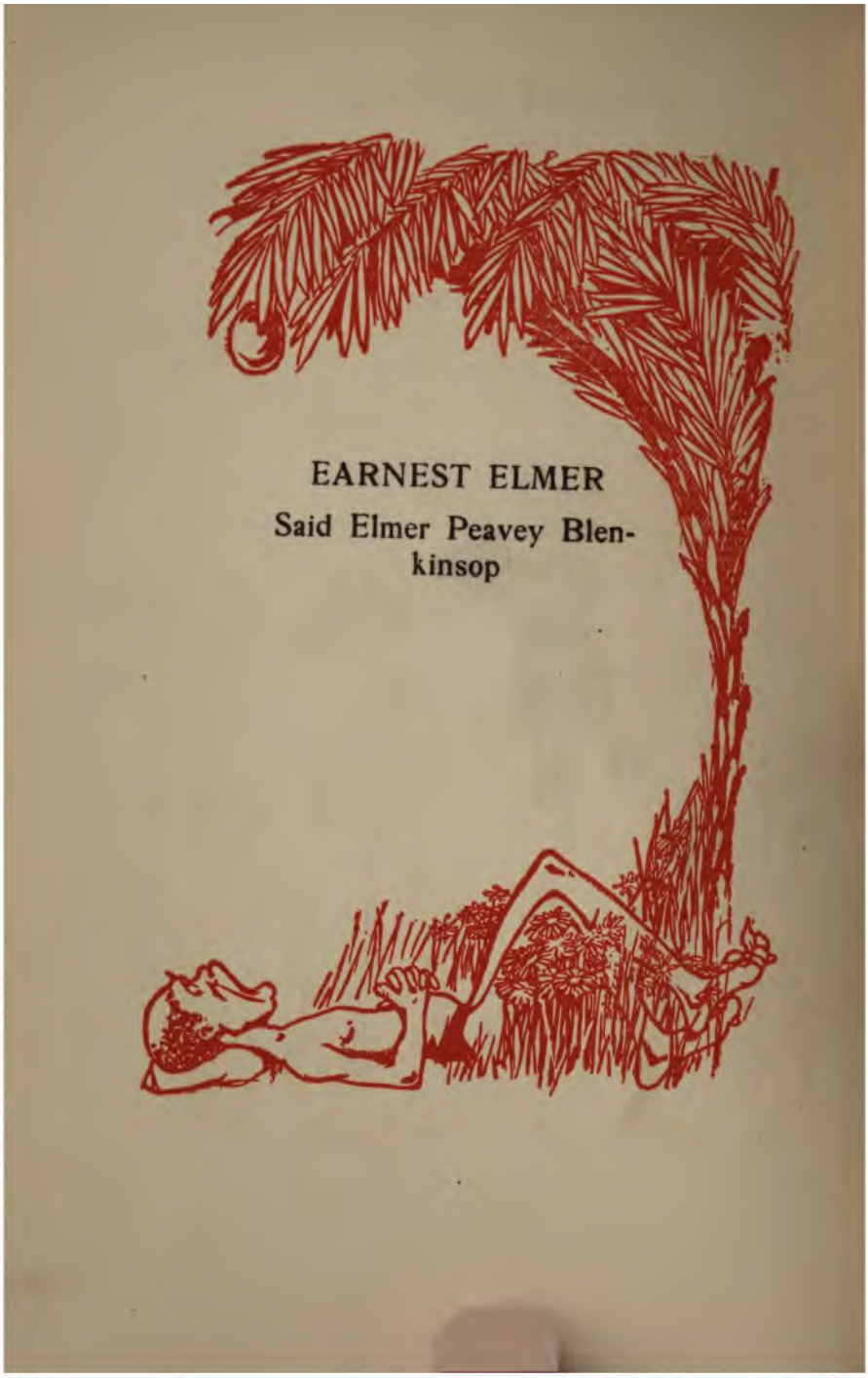


ABSTEMIOUS

I seldom drink ink with my meals

A SWEET THOUGHT

"If half this road were made of jam,
The other half of bread,
How very nice my walks would be,"
The greedy infant said.

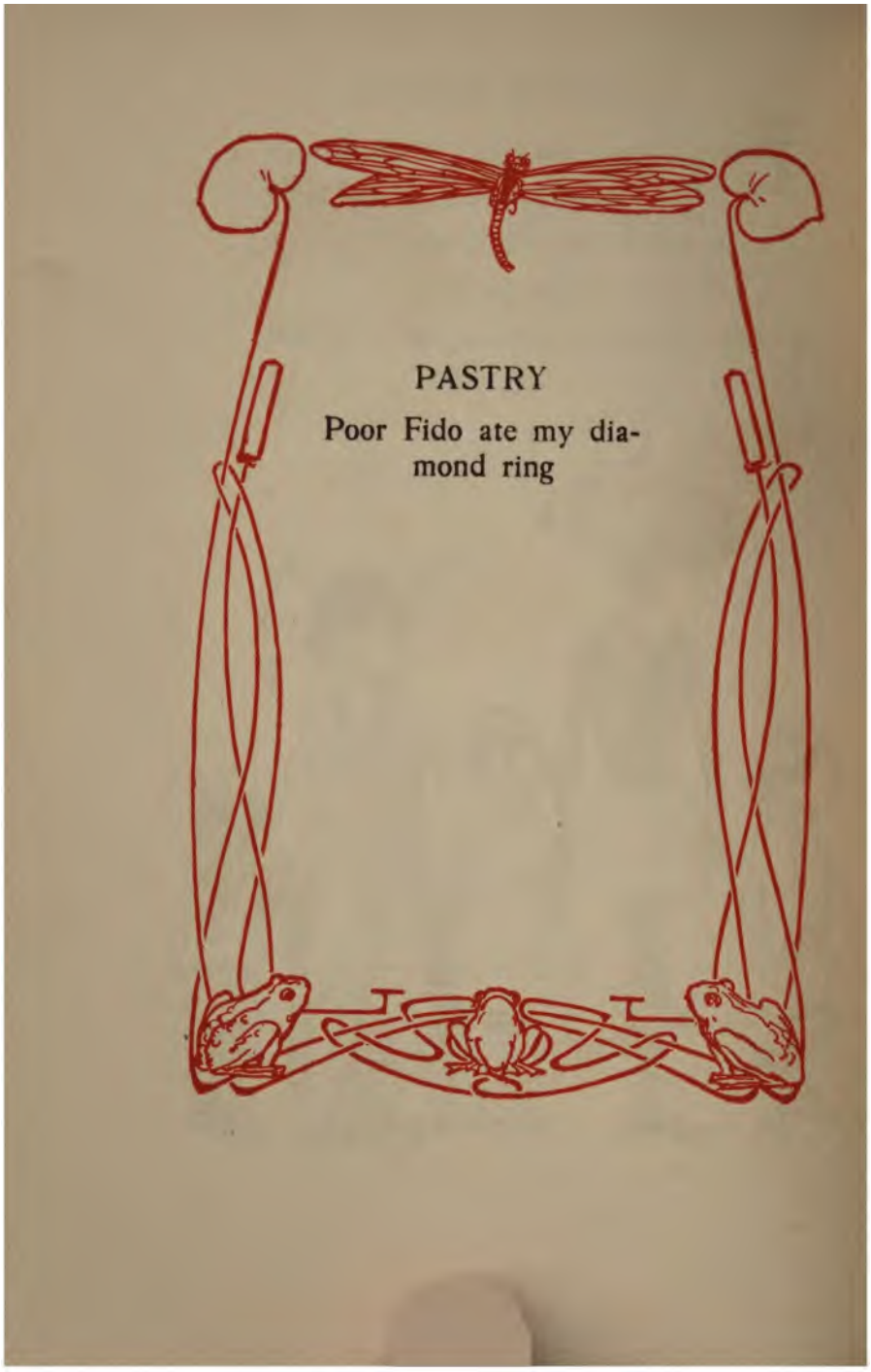


EARNEST ELMER

Said Elmer Peavey Blen-
kinsop

A COLOR SCHEME

There was a young girl from Japan,
Who eloped with a cannibal man;
Ace-black was the fellow,
The girl a bright yellow,
And the children were all black-and-tan.

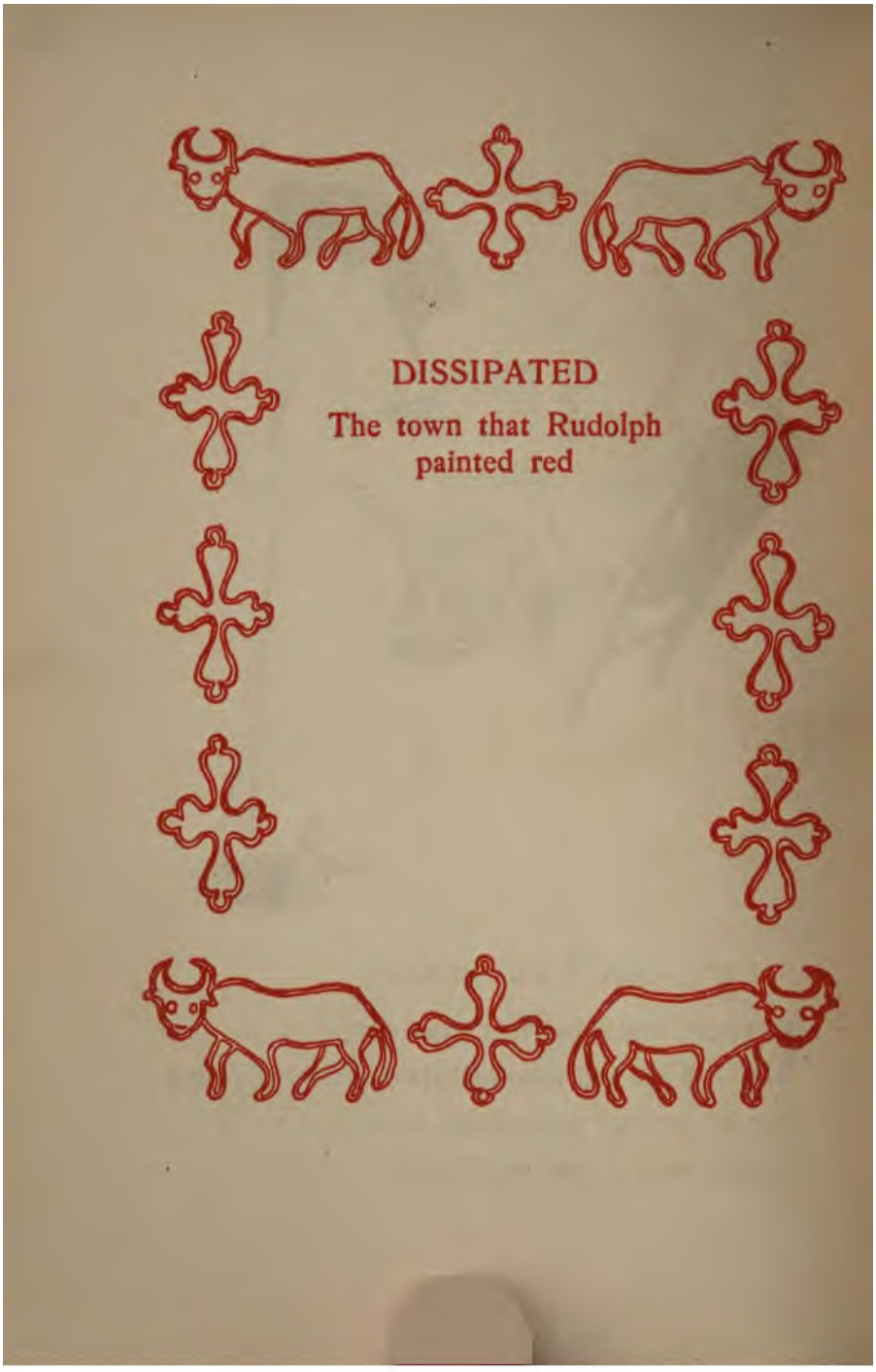


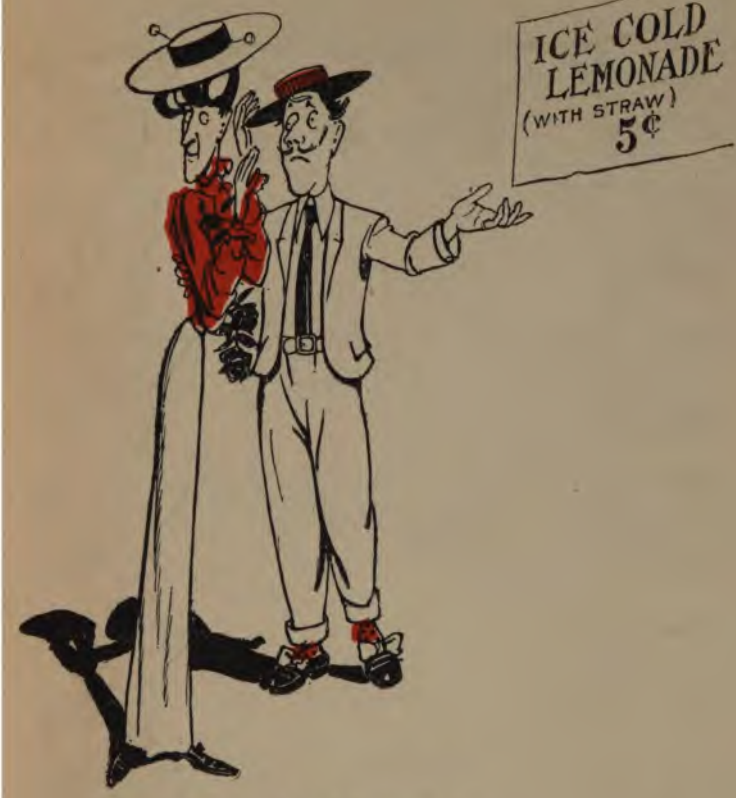
PASTRY

Poor Fido ate my dia-
mond ring

OUT OF PLACE

Uncle, when his feet were damp,
Went and wrapped them round the lamp;
But his young, determined niece
Moved them to the mantelpiece.


DISSIPATED
The town that Rudolph
painted red



TOO THIN

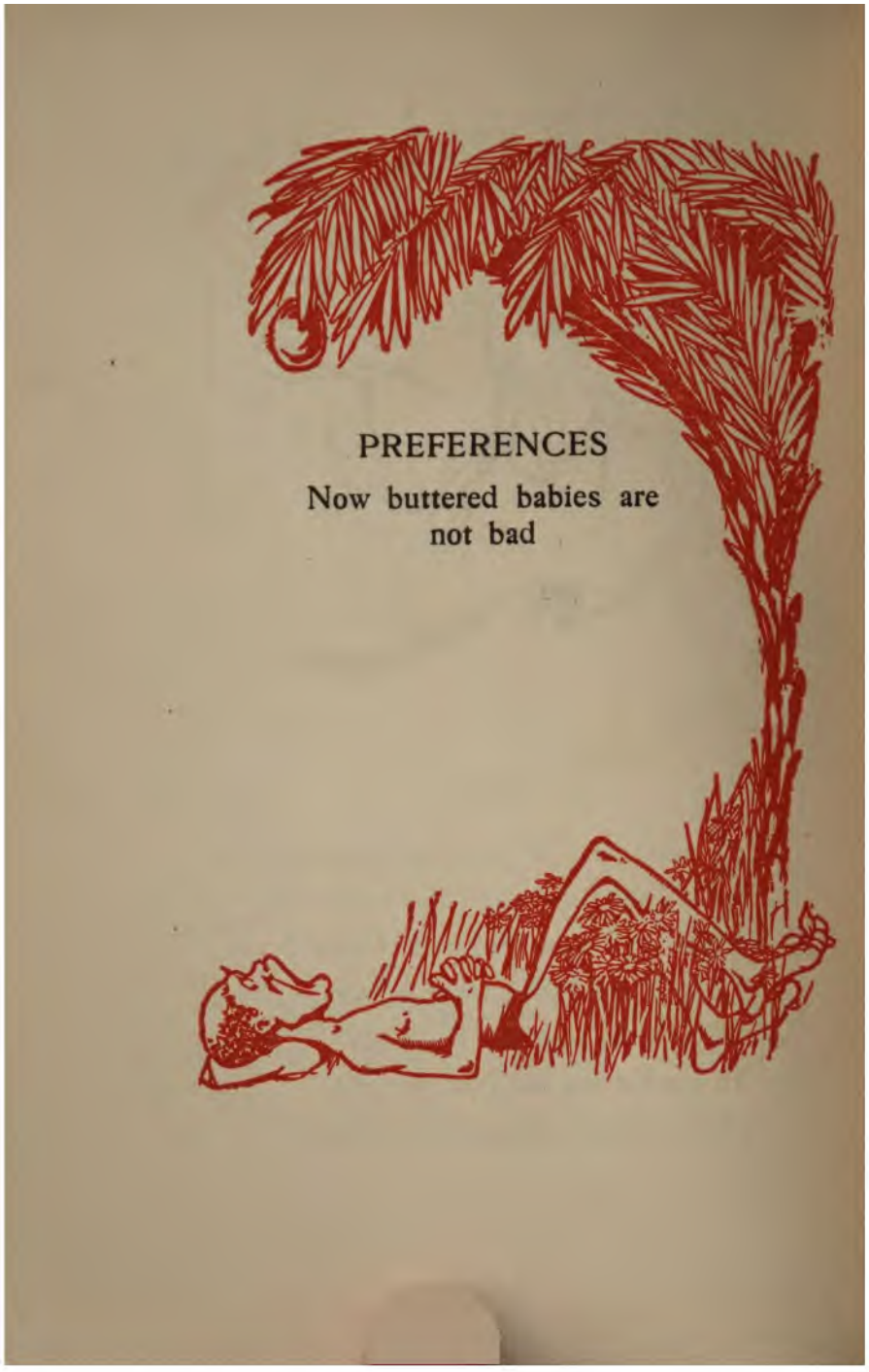
There was a young lady of Lynn,
Who was so exceedingly thin,
That when she essayed
To imbibe lemonade,
She slipped through the straw and fell in.

RESTFUL

The fly-paper sheets
on my bed

SEE?

Said Cecie, "I've stepped down to see
That submarine slip out to sea."
"But see," says Seaman Hennessy,
"She sinks with such a secrecy,
We seldom sees her go to sea;
Ye cannot see her now, for she
Has gone to sea herself," says he.



PREFERENCES

Now buttered babies are
not bad

THE BIRD IN HAND

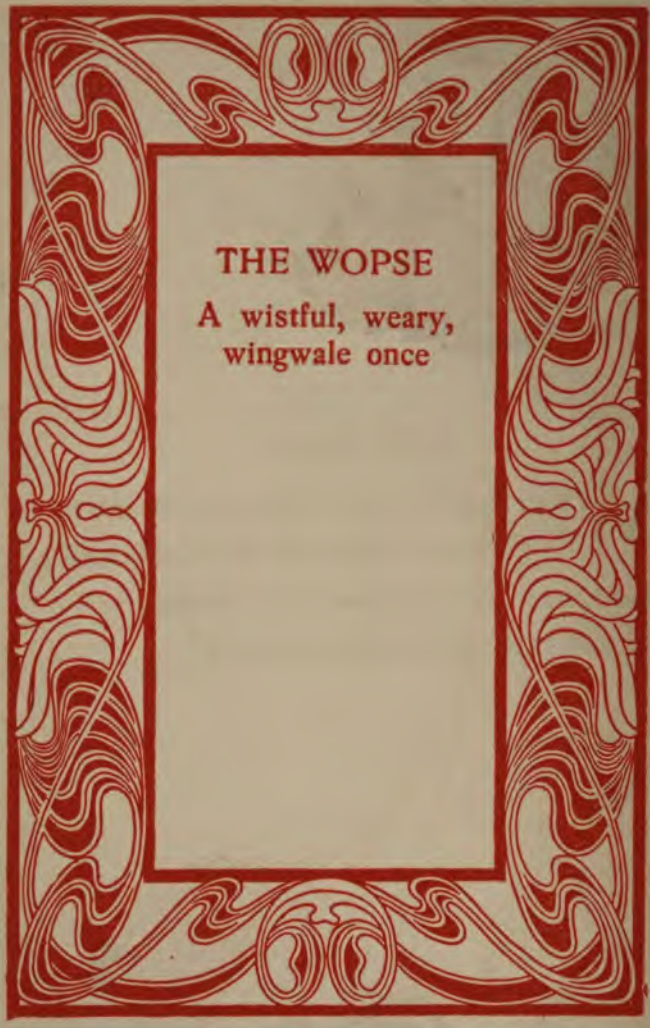
There was an old man who said, "Hush,
There's a bird, I am sure, in that bush—
But I can't understand
How to get it in hand,
For it's three times as big as the bush!"

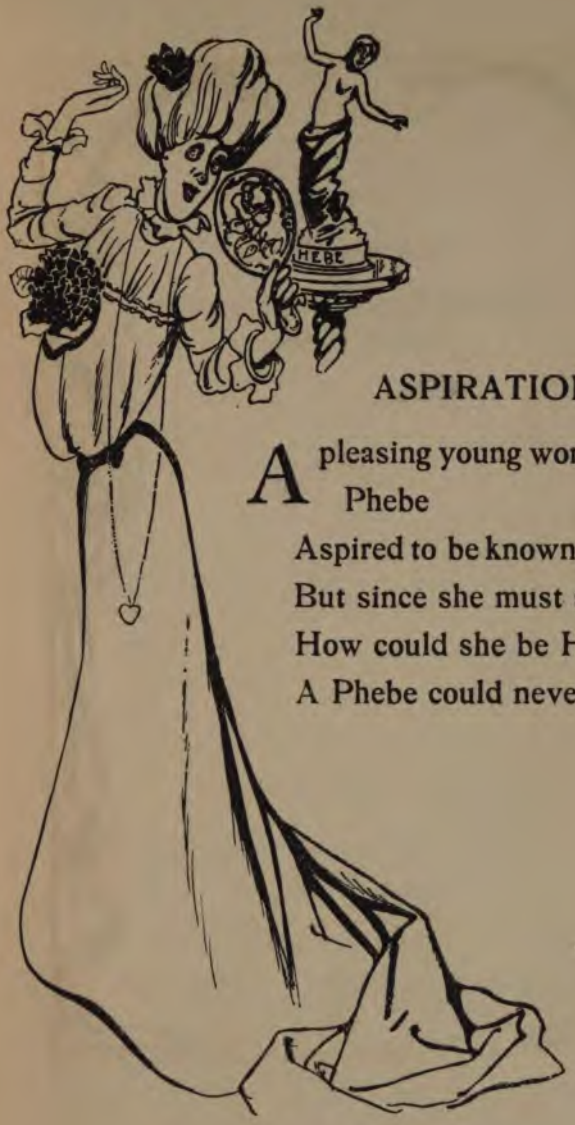
THE
TOBOGGAN

Little packs of playing-cards

CONTRARY

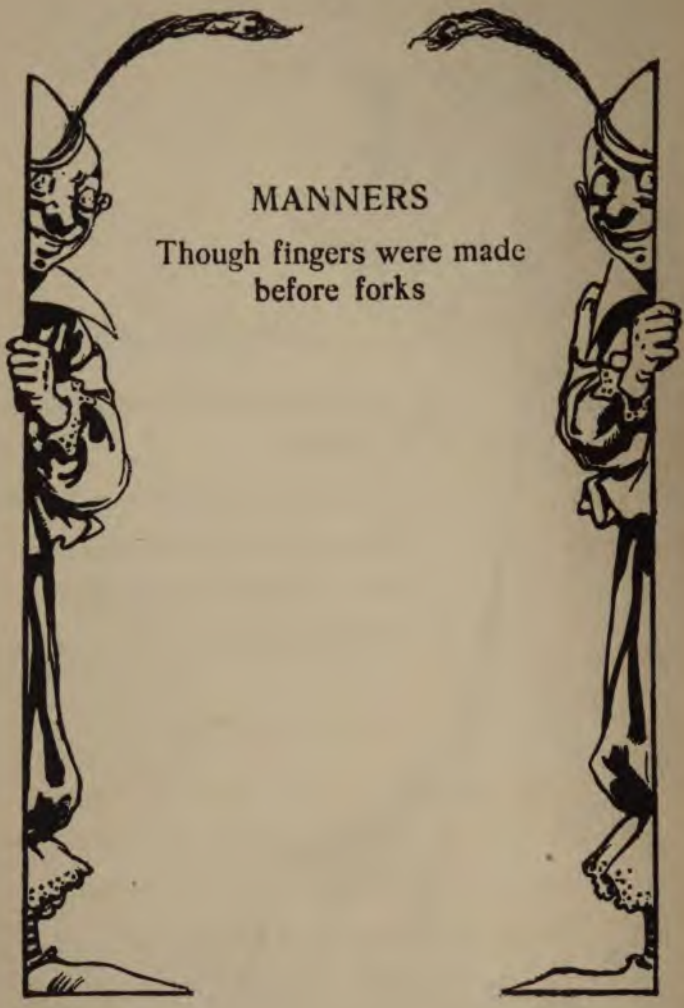
When Francis went fishing with Mary,
He threw her right out of the boat;
Said he, "Now just see how contrary–
She is even attempting to float!"


THE WOPSE
A wistful, weary,
wingwale once



ASPIRATION

A pleasing young woman named Phebe
Aspired to be known as a Hebe.
But since she must she be,
How could she be Hebe?
A Phebe could never a he be.

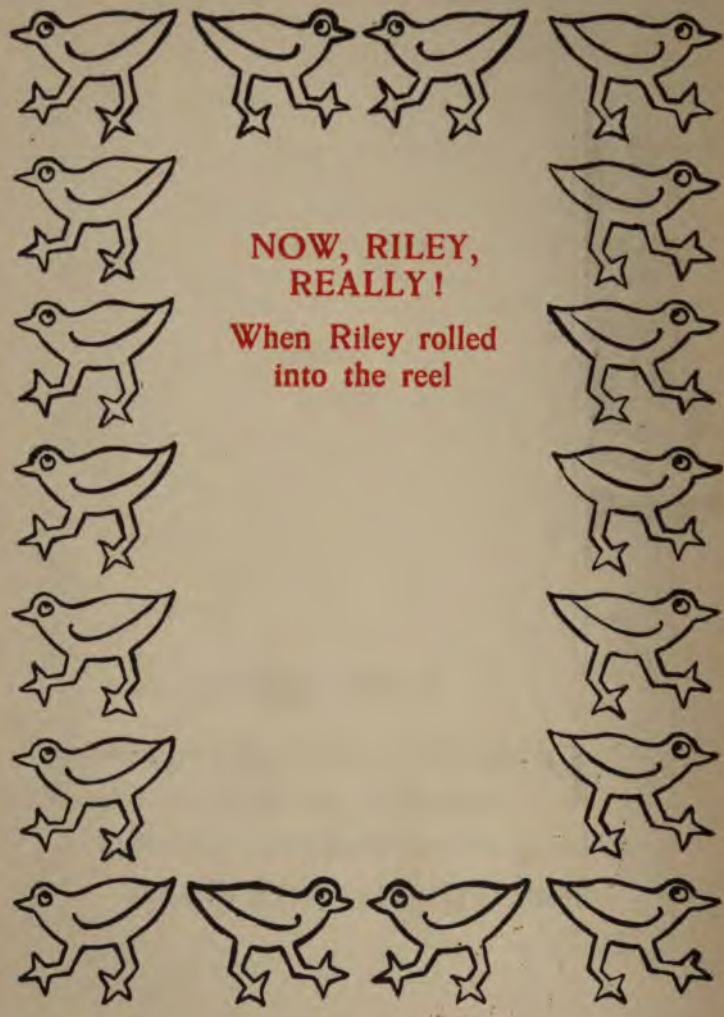


MANNERS

Though fingers were made
before forks

POOR DOTTIE

Prigged her mother's pickled peaches,
Dottie did—and died with screeches.
Heed this touching tale : it teaches
Mothers shouldn't pickle peaches.



NOW, RILEY,
REALLY!

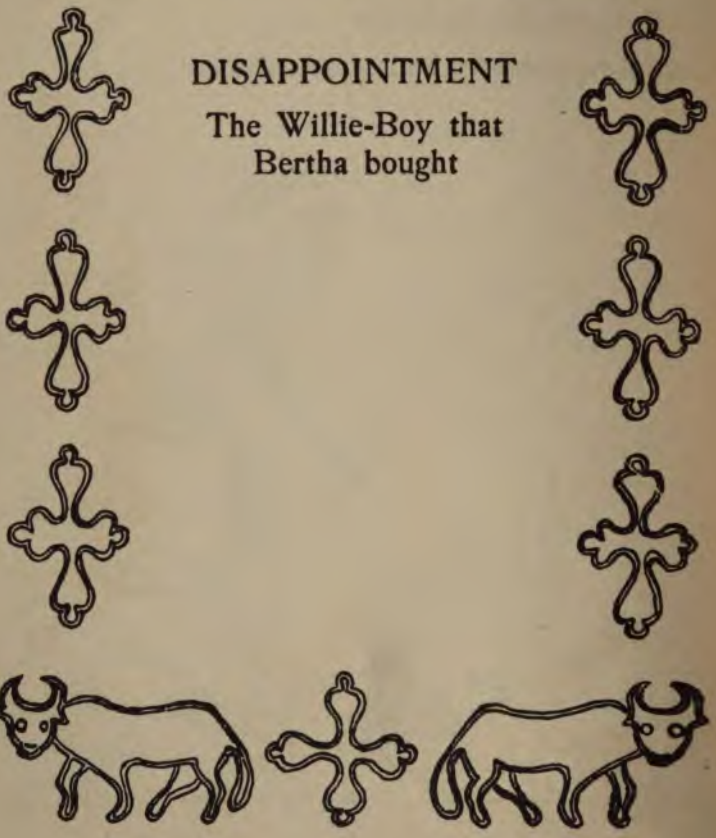
When Riley rolled
into the reel

PACHYDERMATOUS

There was a young man so benighted
He didn't know when he was slighted;
He'd go to a party,
And eat just as hearty
As though he'd been really invited.

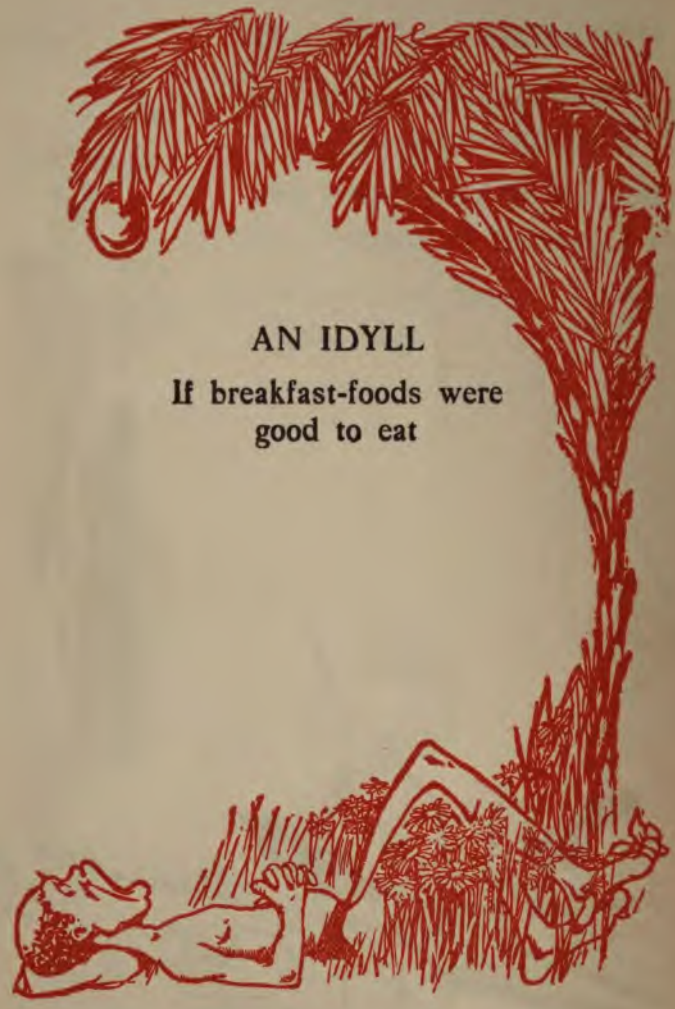
DISAPPOINTMENT

The Willie-Boy that Bertha bought



THE HEEDLESS CHILD

What's this mess upon the floor—
Sister lying in her gore!
Charles, put up your Papa's gun,
Can't I trust my little son?

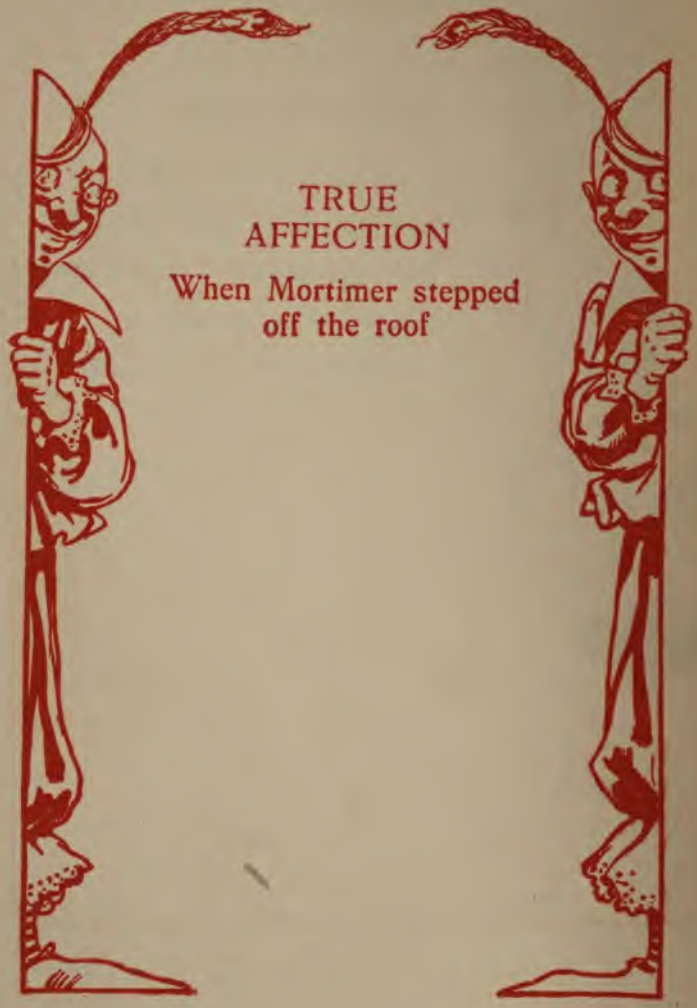


AN IDYLL

If breakfast-foods were good to eat

TO TEW, TOO

A tardy young damsel from Tew
Once started to catch the 2.02.
Said the porter, " Don't hurry,
Or worry, or scurry,
It's a minute or two to 2.02."

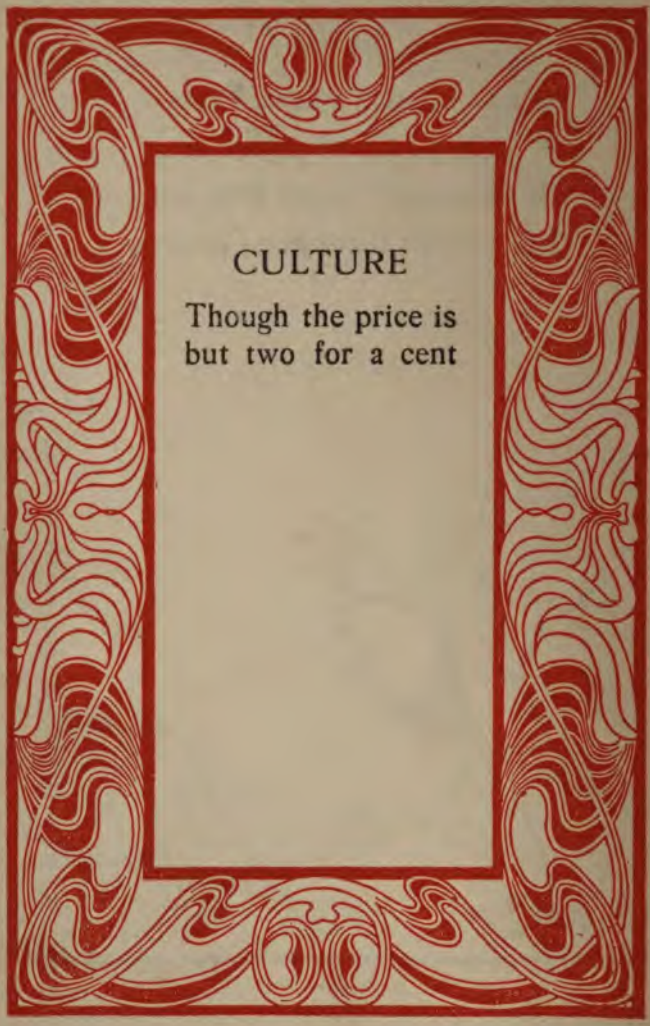


TRUE AFFECTION

When Mortimer stepped off the roof

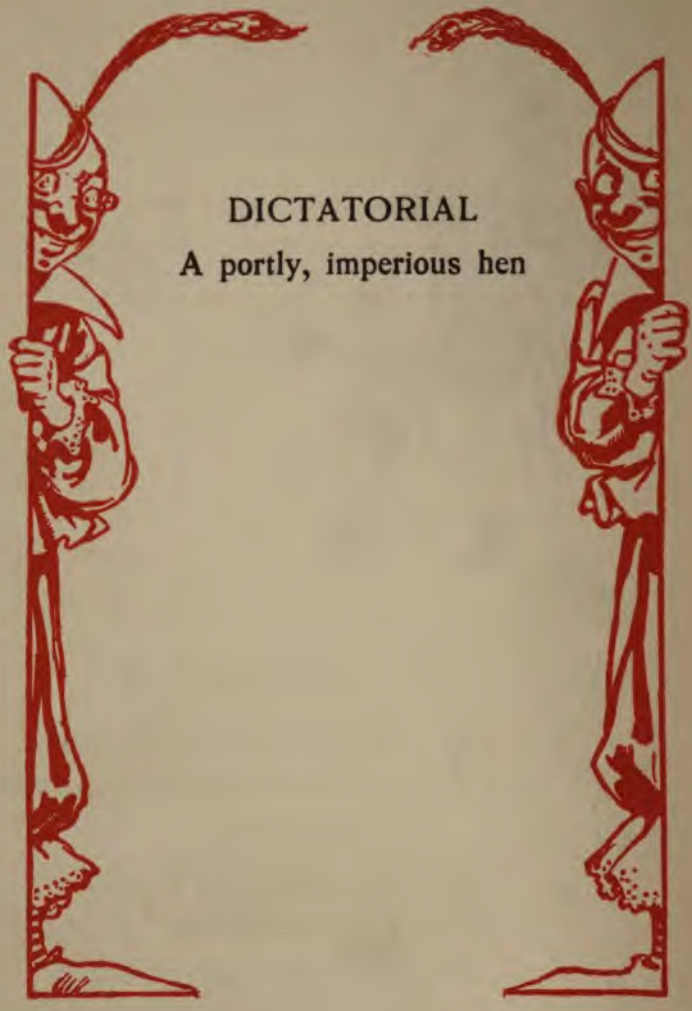
SURE!

I never saw a Purple Cow—
I hope I'll never see one;
But from the Purple Milk we get,
I know that there must be one.


CULTURE
Though the price is
but two for a cent

THE TOOTER

A Tutor who tooted the flute,
Tried to teach two young toot-
ers to toot;
Said the two to the Tutor,
"Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tooters to toot?"



DICTATORIAL

A portly, imperious hen

HARD TO PLEASE

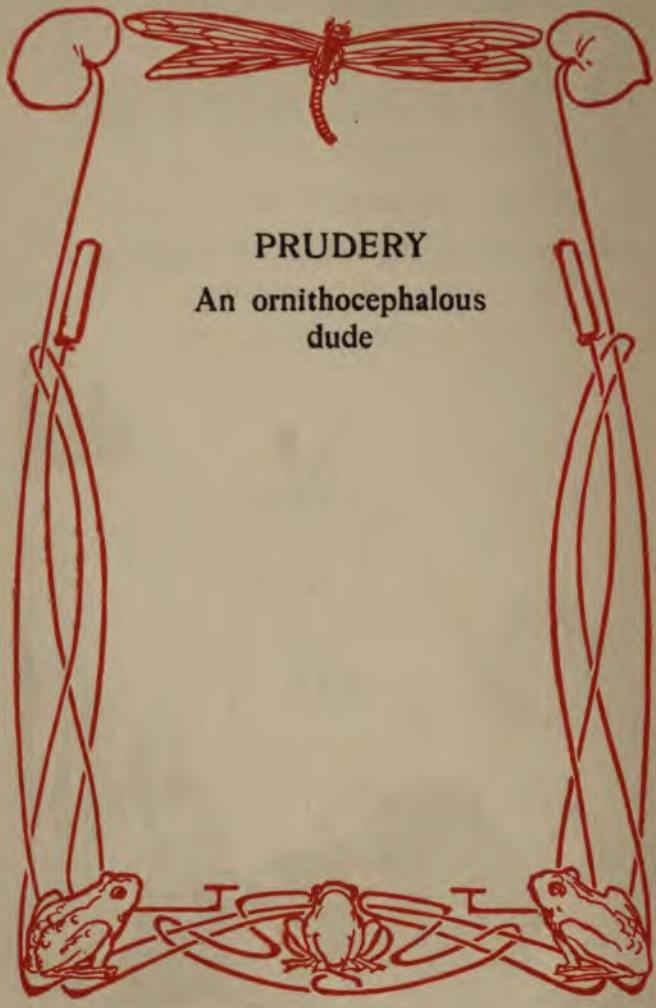
My fur-lined overcoat, they say,
Is heavy for an August day;
My suit of gauze, too, I remember,
They thought was chilly for December.
To please them all would try a saint—
I think I'll wear a coat of paint.

A WISE GUY

If I were as wise as
I look

MISAPPLIED ENERGY

A muscular Turk of Stamboul
Tried to pull out the tail of a mule.
A coroner's ju-
Ry the body did view,
And brought in the verdict—" Damfool."



PRUDERY

An ornithocephalous dude

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

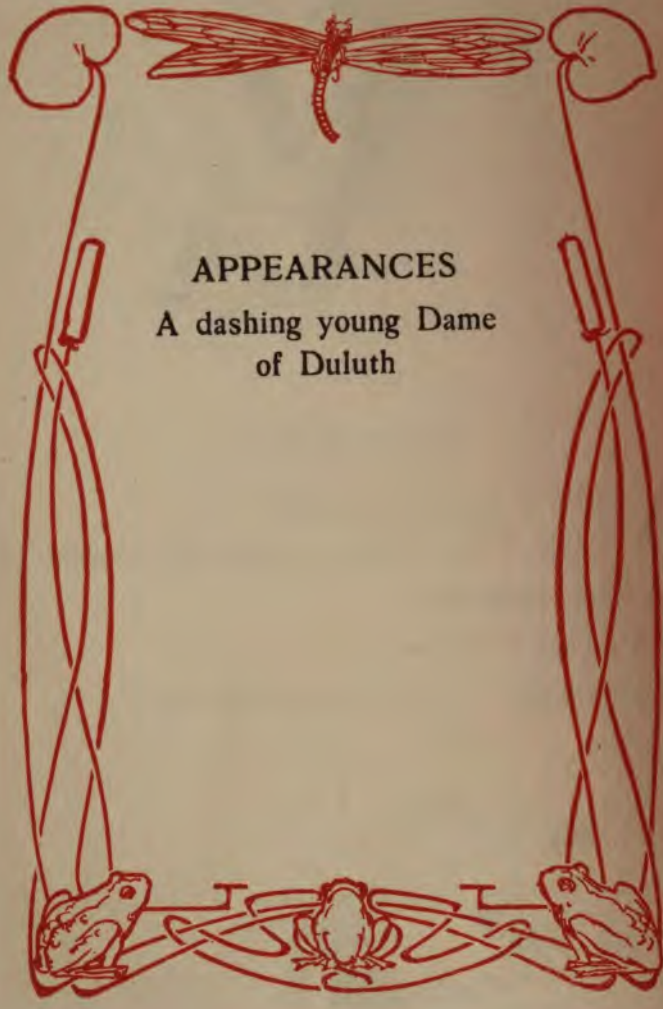
My waist is so ample in size
That I can't see my feet with my eyes;
So I sometimes have found
When they should touch the ground
They are really turned up to the skies.

THE WORST OF IT

Evangeline, the Sweet Young Thing

RECIPROCITY

A famous American preacher
Said, "The Hen is a wonderful creature!"
The Hen, upon that,
Laid an egg in his hat,
And thus did the Hen-reward-Beecher.



APPEARANCES

A dashing young Dame
of Duluth

A HUSTLER

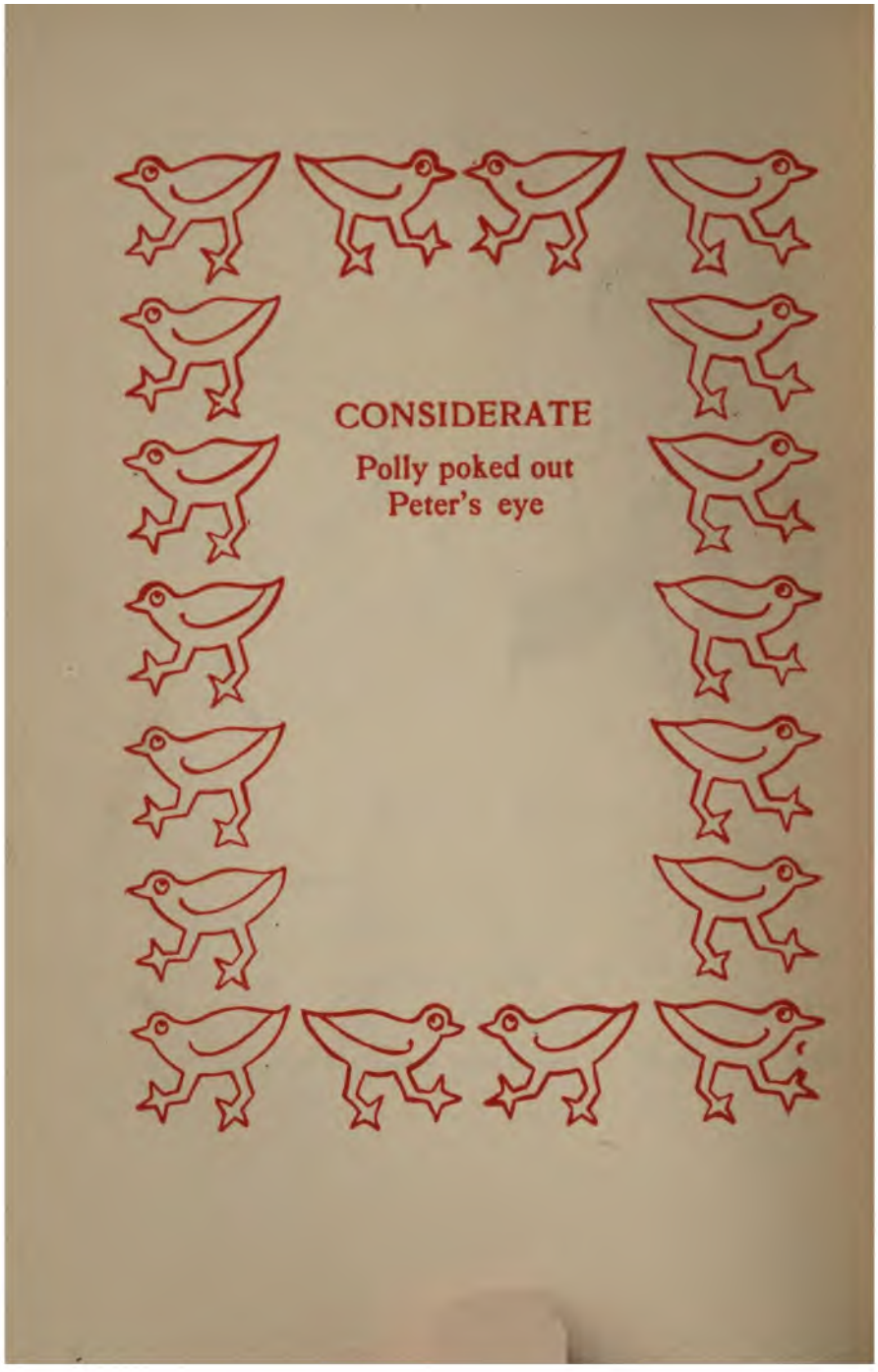
We have a hustling servant girl,
She keeps us going in a whirl;
She cooks the breakfast while we sup,
And makes our beds before we're up.

A LITTLE TOO MUCH

Puella Porter
was a Peach

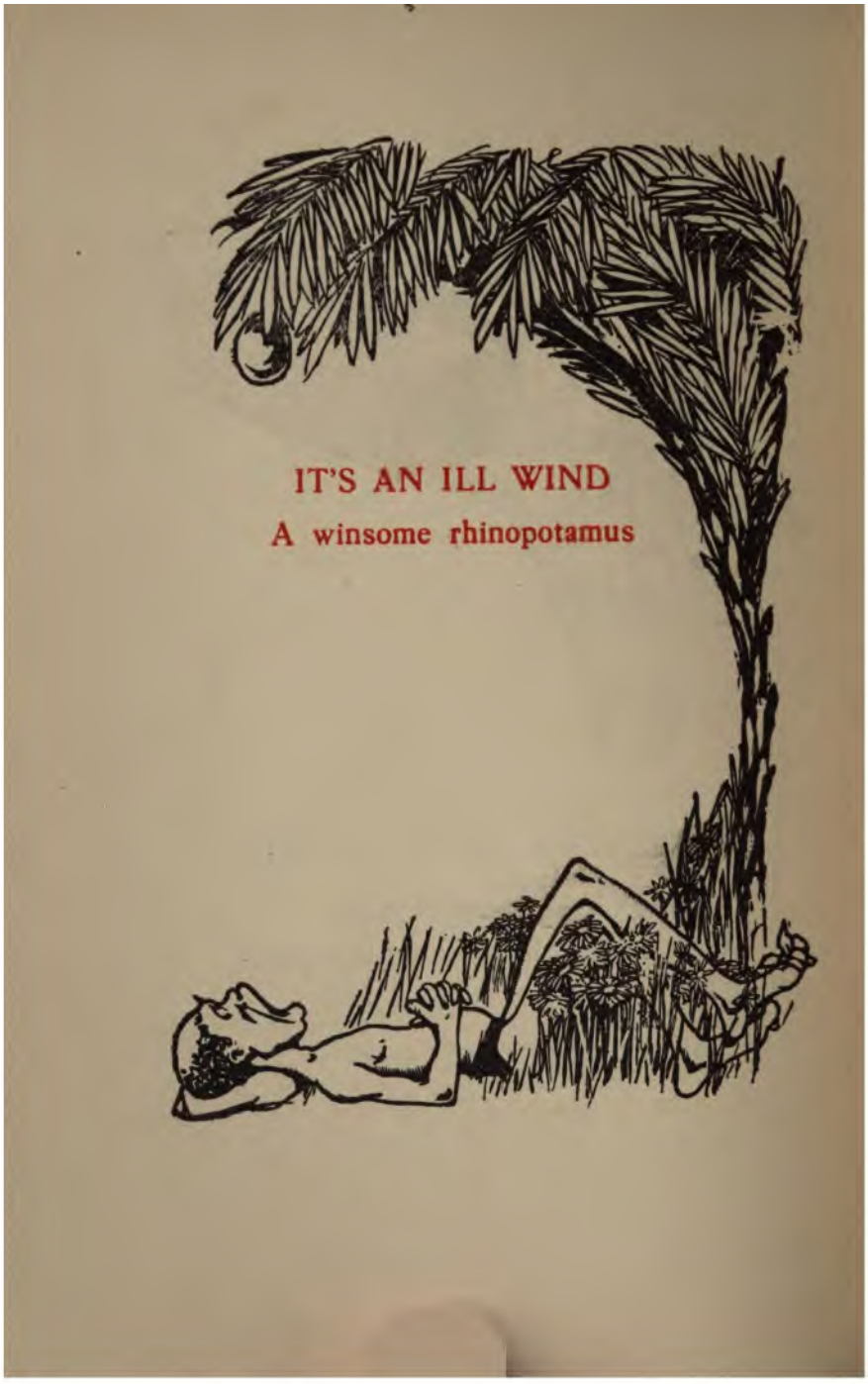
MAYBE IT WAS

There was a young man of St. Bees,
Who was stung on the nose by a Wasp,
When they asked, " Does it hurt ? "
He replied, " No, it doesn't ; "
But he thought all the while 'twas a Hornet.


CONSIDERATE
Polly poked out
Peter's eye

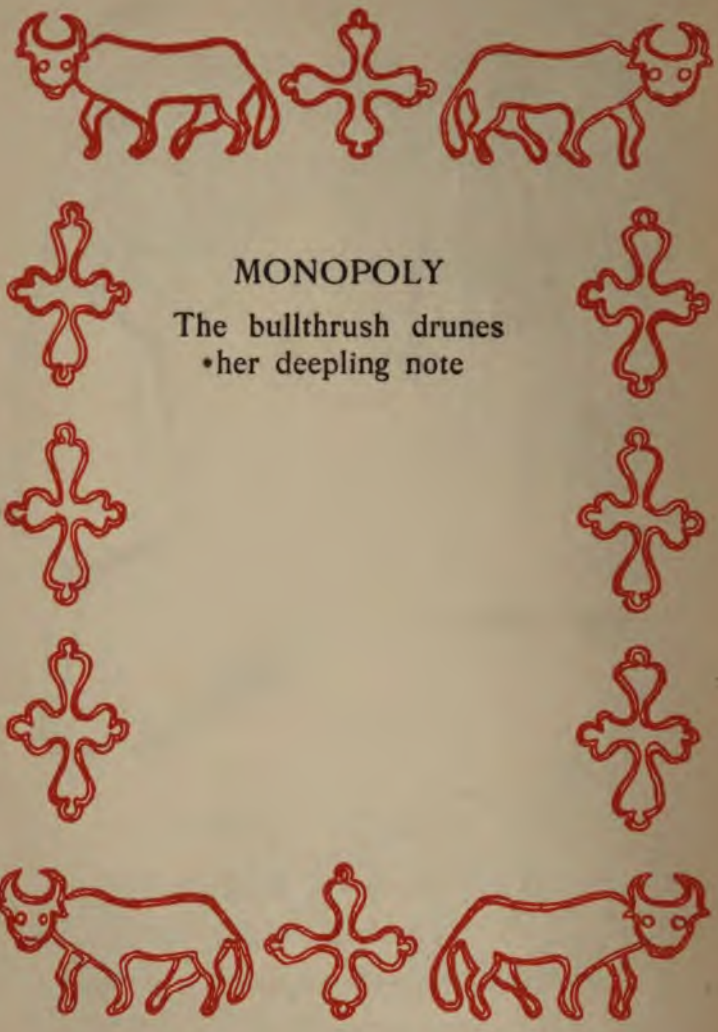
MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

Little Georgie, full of glee,
Licked the paint off the settee;
Such a thoughtful little man—
Helps dear mother all he can!


IT'S AN ILL WIND
A winsome rhinopotamus

TWO OF A KIND

A fellow named Teddy Magee,
Returning one day from a spree,
Met the parson, who said—
"Ah, drunk again, Ted!"
"So'm I, parson," gurgled Magee.

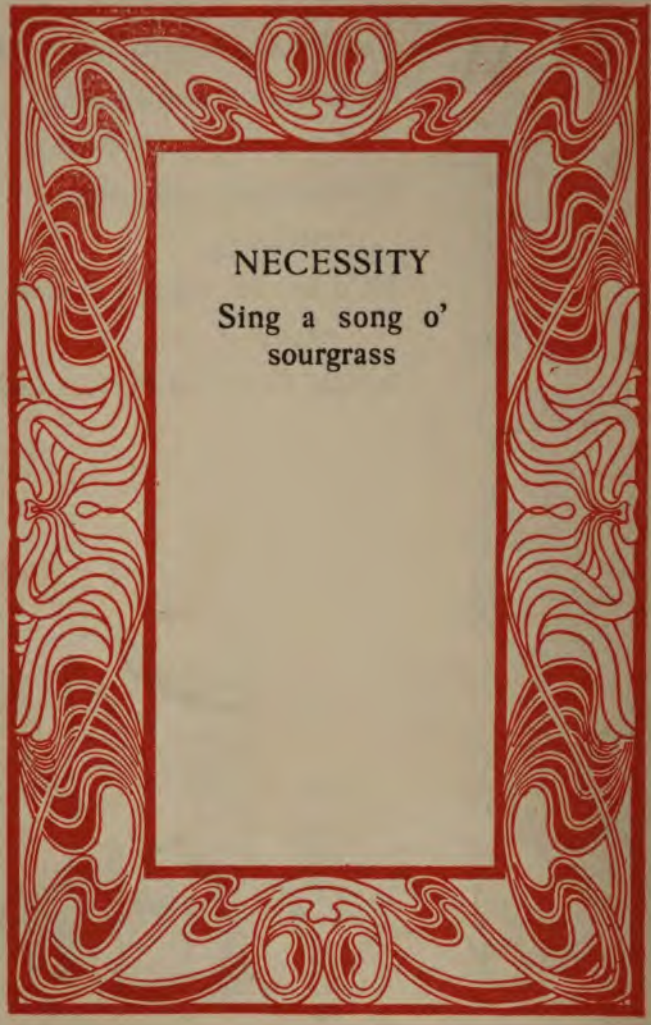


MONOPOLY

The bullthrush drunes
•her deepling note

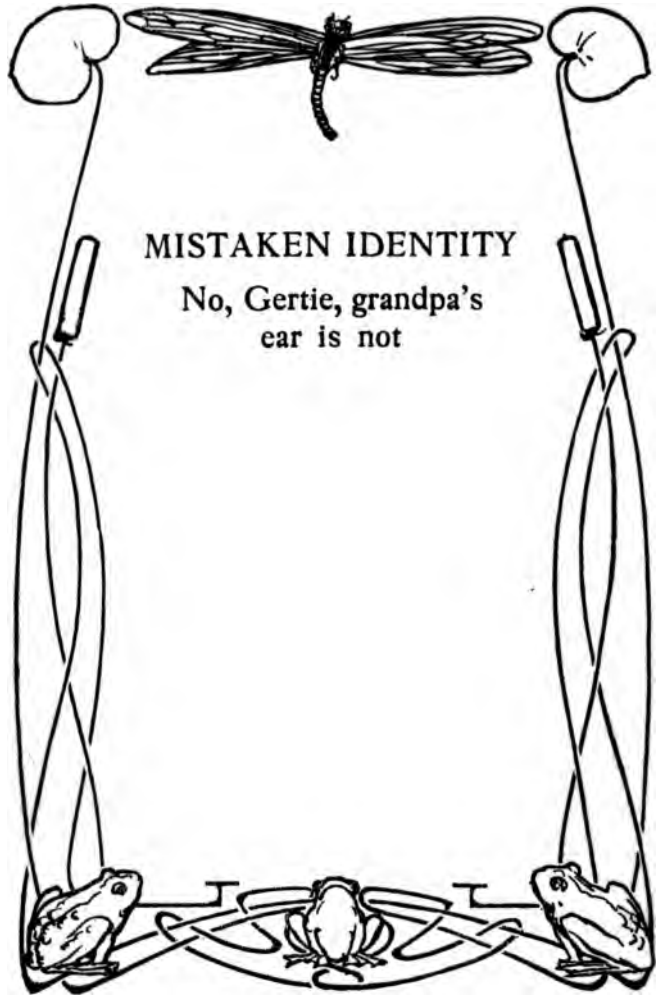
DELICACY

When undressed lumber Percy spied
He delicately turned aside ;
And at a bare suggestion he
Would blush with virgin
modesty.
He'd use no street if it was
shady—
In fact, he was a Perfect Lady.


NECESSITY
Sing a song o'
sourgrass

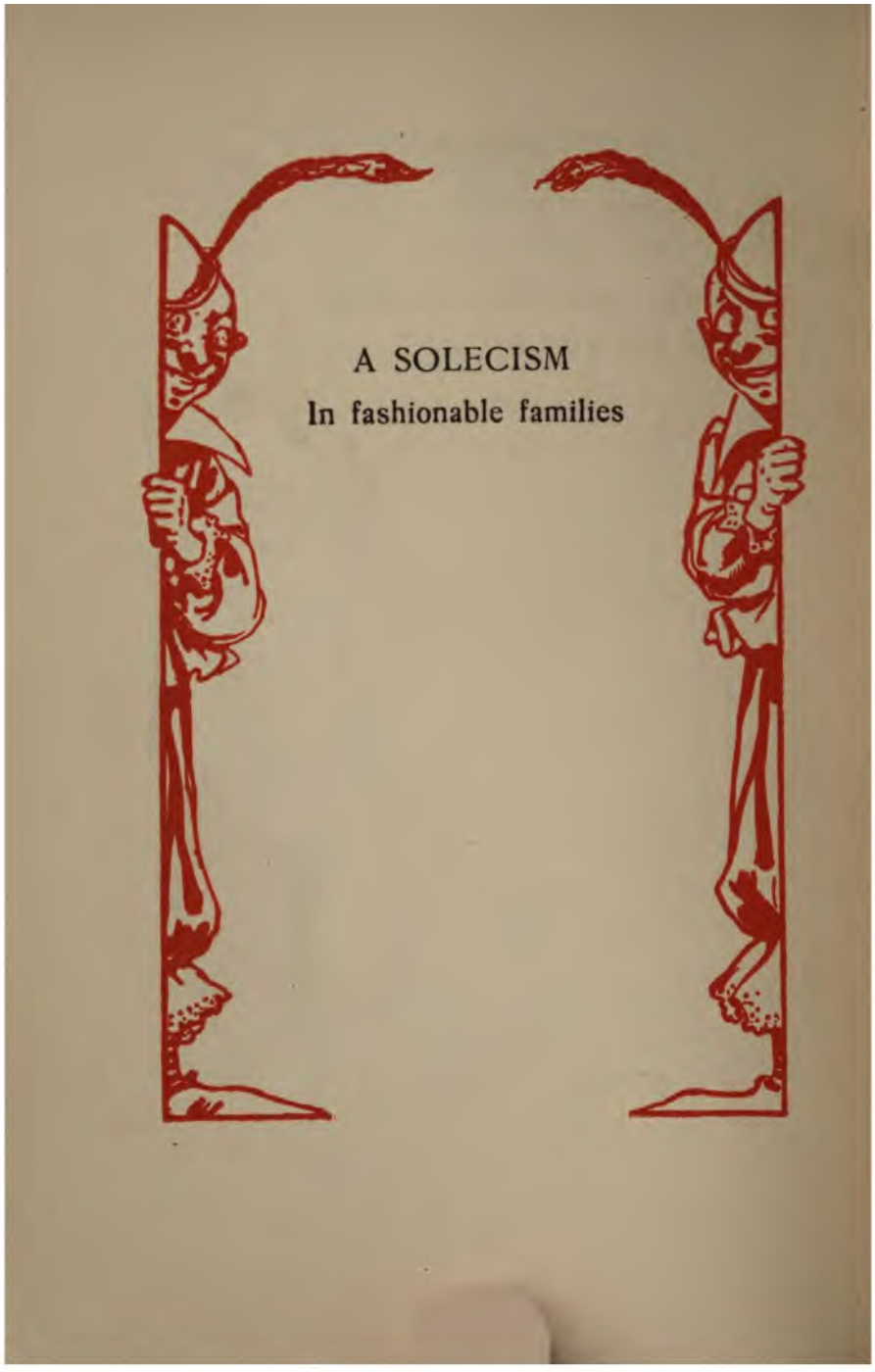
EXCESSIVE

There was a young woman named Perkins,
With a passionate love for green gherkins ;
But once, just for sport,
She ate more than a quart,
And pickled her internal workin's.


MISTAKEN IDENTITY
No, Gertie, grandpa's
ear is not

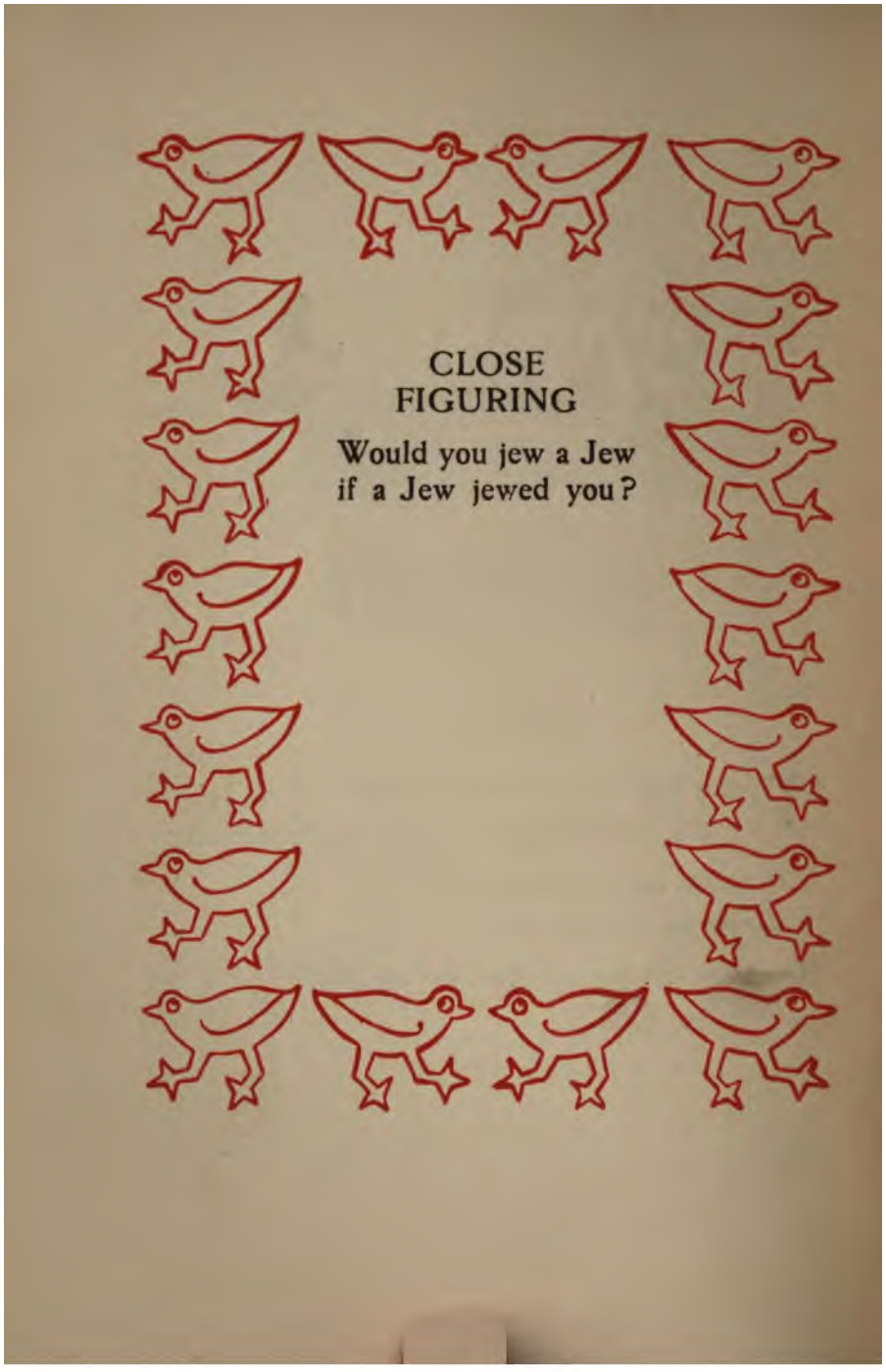
TUT-TUT, MAUDIE!

Little dabs of powder,
Little spots of paint,
Make my Auntie Maudie's cheeks
Look like what they ain't.


A SOLECISM
In fashionable families

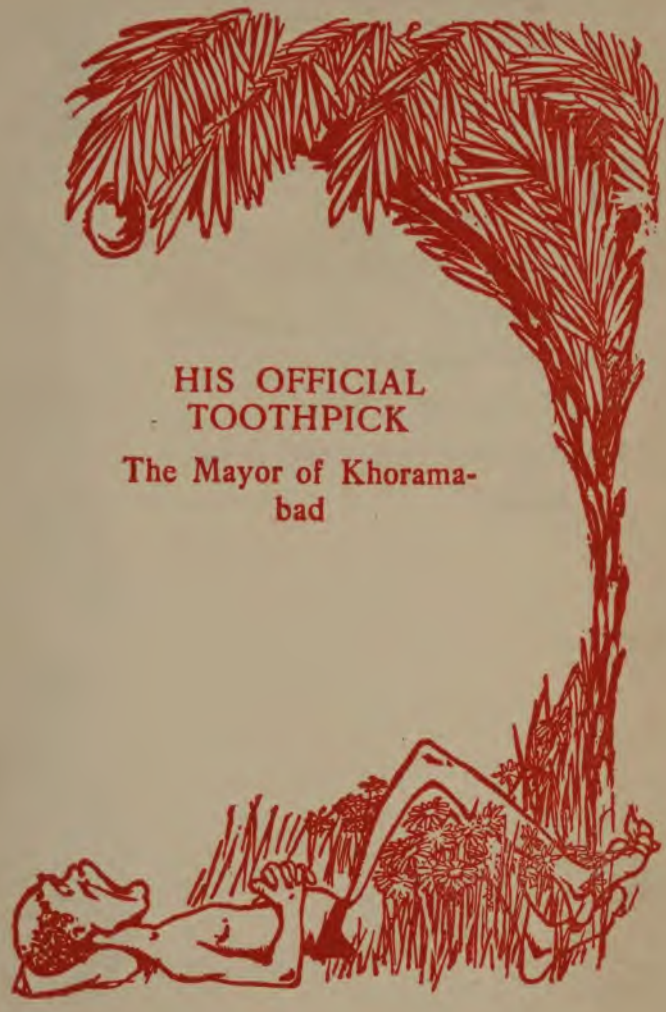
TIED UP

There was an old lady of Delf,
Who was wholly wrapped up in herself;
It might have been kinder
To try to unwind her—
But they left her in knots on the shelf.


CLOSE
FIGURING
Would you jew a Jew
if a Jew jewed you?

QUEERED

There was an Old Man with
a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I
feared!—
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my
beard!"

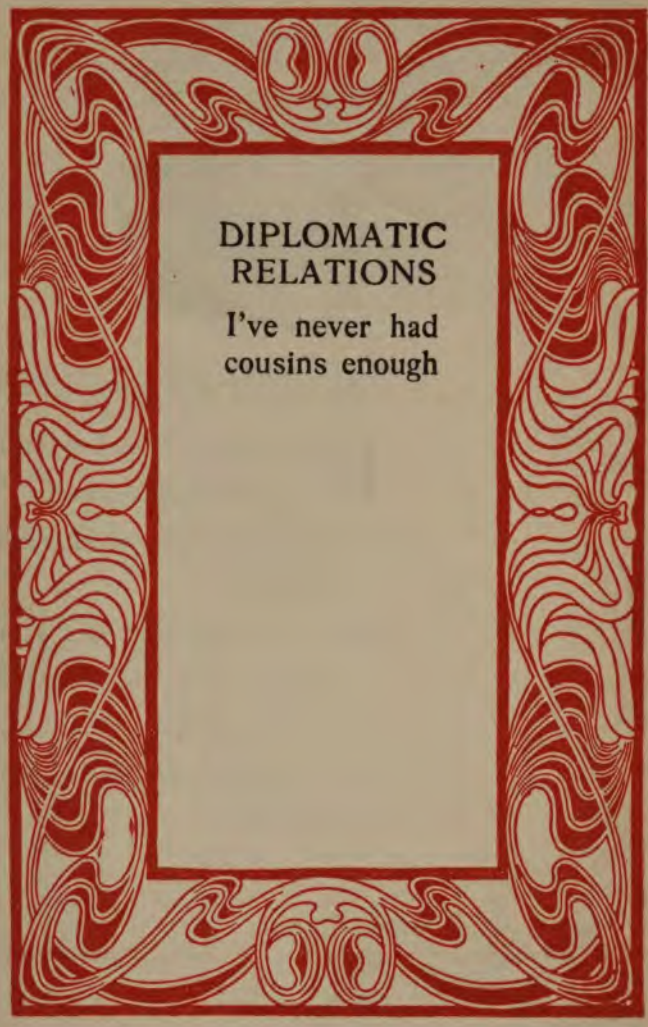


HIS OFFICIAL TOOTHPICK

The Mayor of Khorama-bad

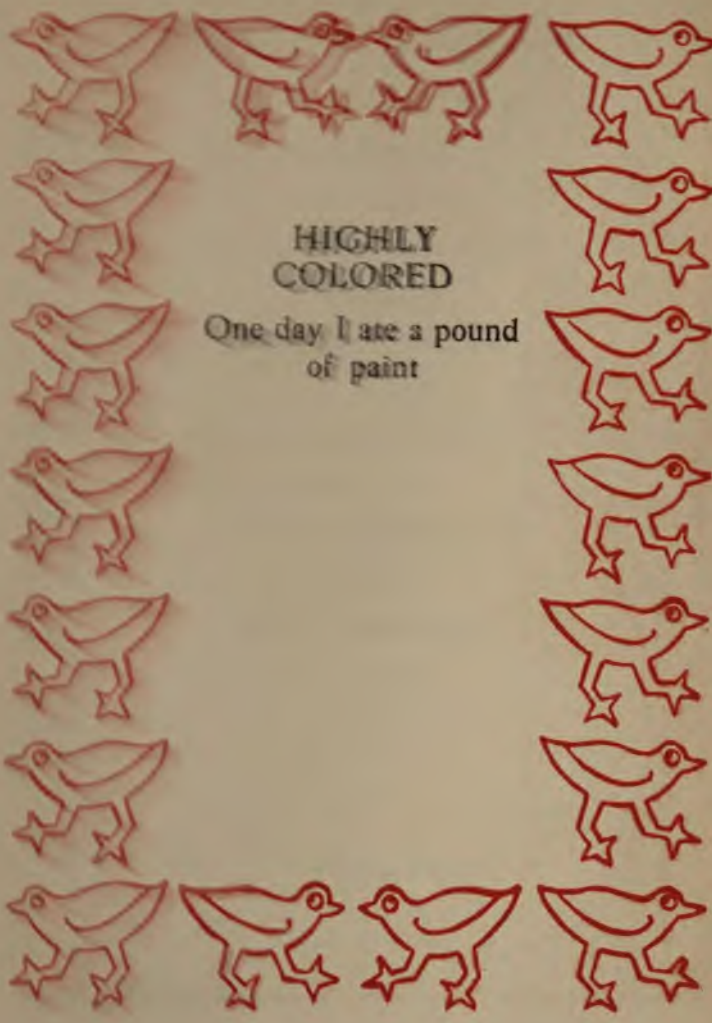
WOULD HE CHUCK?

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck,
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?
Why, a woodchuck would chuck all the wood he could chuck,
If a woodchuck could chuck wood!


DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS
I've never had
cousins enough

DISCONNECTING JENNIE

After the ball is over
Jennie takes out her
glass eye,
Puts her false teeth in the
tumbler,
Stops up her bottle of
dye—
Stands her cork leg
in the corner,
Hangs up her hair on
the wall—
And all that is left
goes
to
bye-
bye—
After the ball.

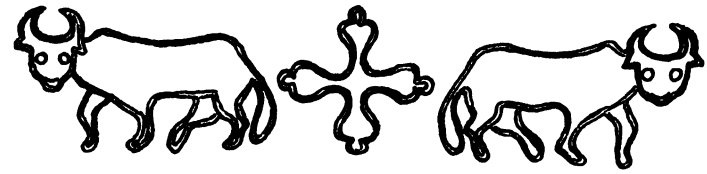


HIGHLY COLORED

One day I ate a pound
of paint

THE KITTY IN THE WOODS

An innocent maid from the city,
When she saw what she thought was a kitty,
Said, "I'll give it a pat;"
But she didn't do that,
And they buried her clothes—what a pity!

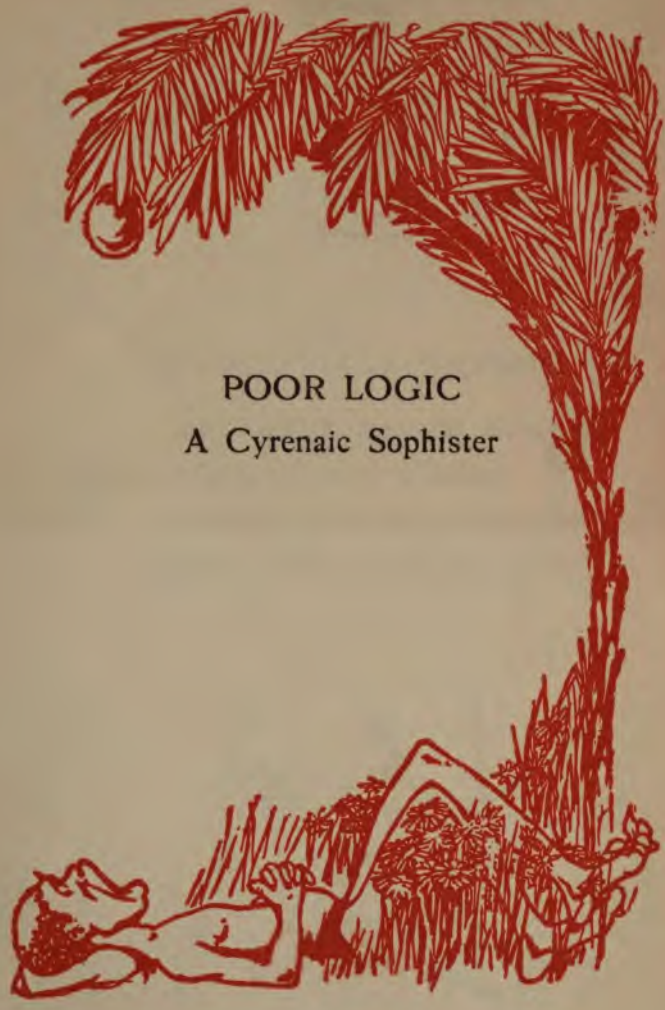


DIRT CHEAP

A jovial hippogriff in sport

DISPOSING OF BERTIE

Bertie, on the railroad track,
Failed to hear the engine squeal;
Now the engine's coming back
Scraping Bertie off the wheel.

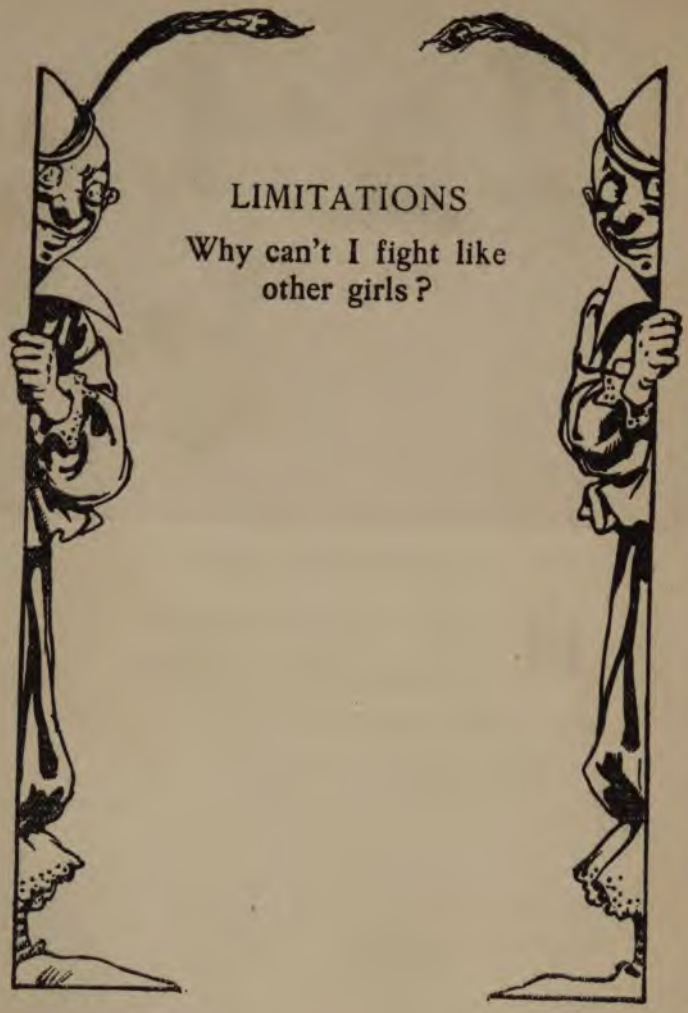


POOR LOGIC

A Cyrenaic Sophister

THE BUZZY BEE

How doth the little buzzy bee
Delight to bark and bite!
He gathers honey all the day—
And eats it up at night.



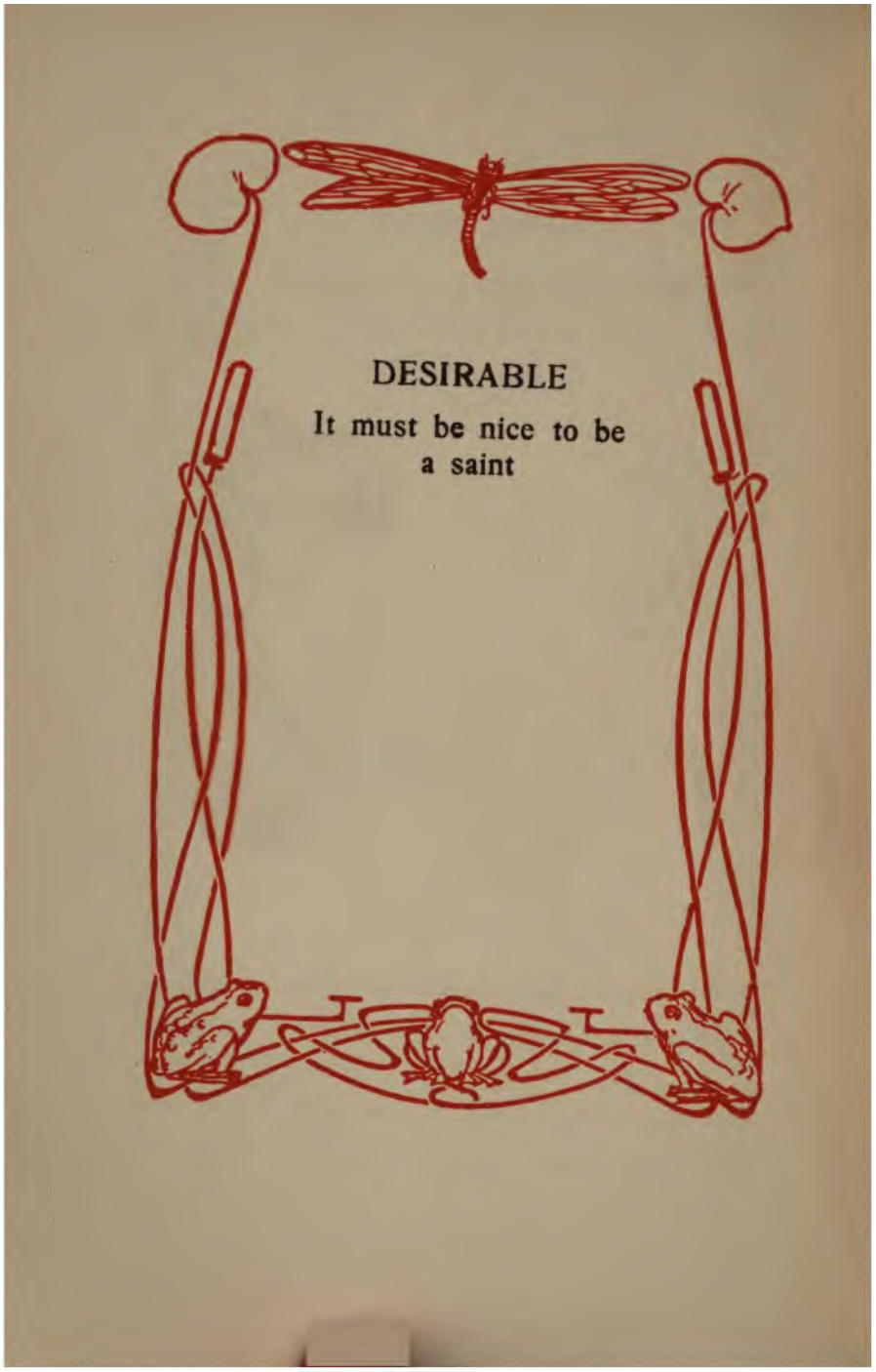
LIMITATIONS

Why can't I fight like other girls?

IMPRUDENT

The baby's tumbled in the well?—
How careless, Bridget—I'm surprised:

You should have called me when he fell,
That water is not sterilized.



DESIRABLE

It must be nice to be
a saint

TURNED DOWN

"Go ask Pa-pa," the maiden said.
The young man knew Pa-pa was dead,
And knew the sort of life he'd led;
So understood her when she said,
"Go—ask Pa-pa."

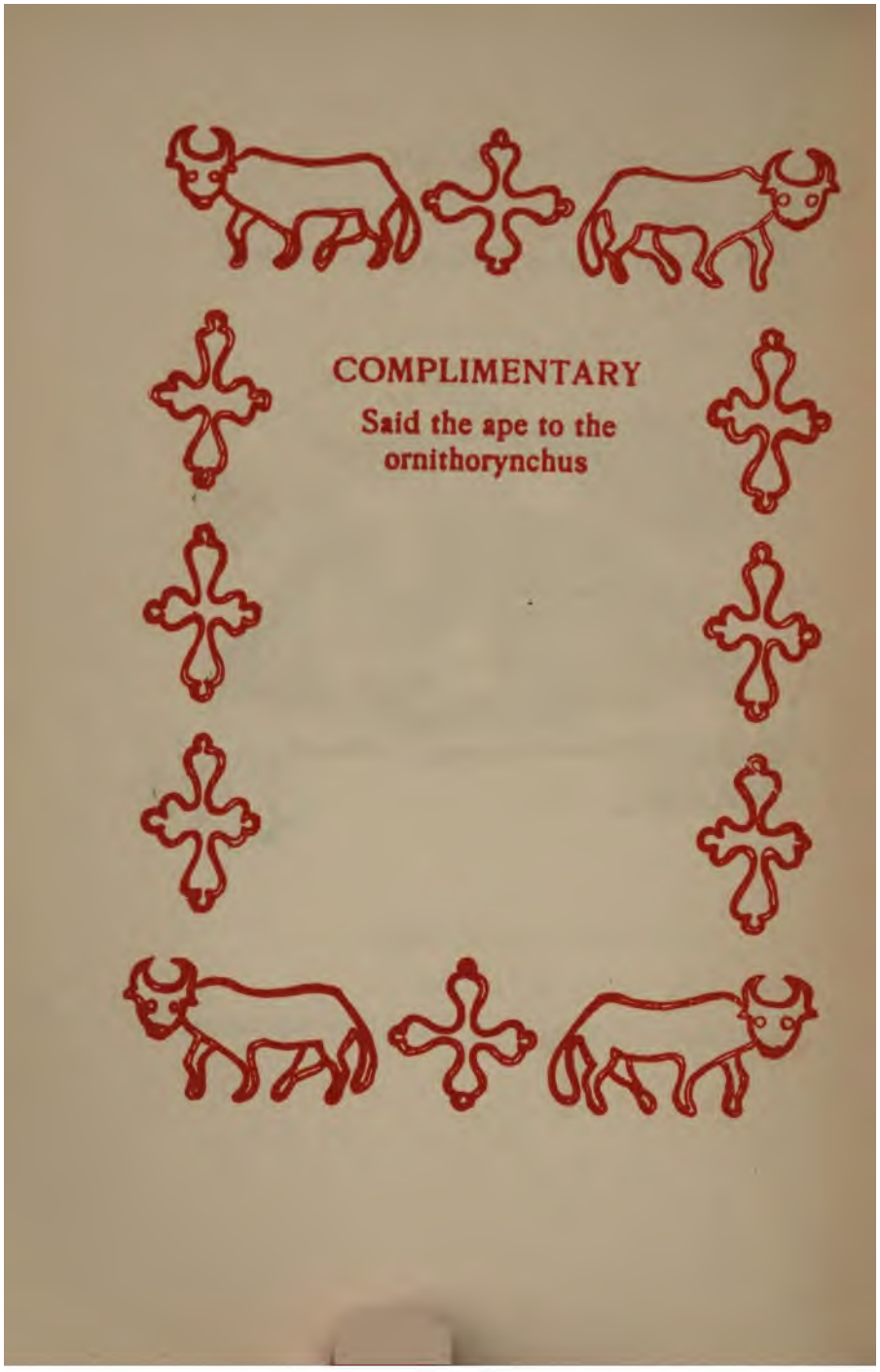
HER DREAM

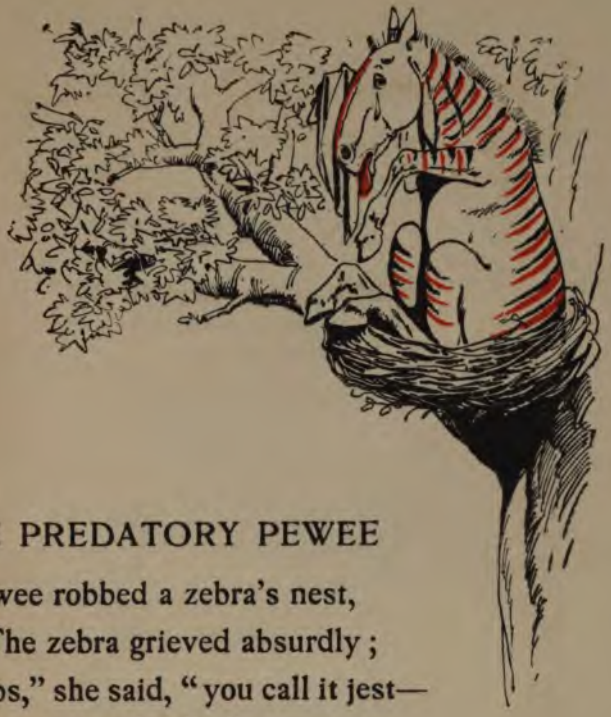
She twined the ham-
mock in her hair

THNKGD

A fellow named Ivan Ketchinski,
Who lived at Marhatshevsdoibinski,

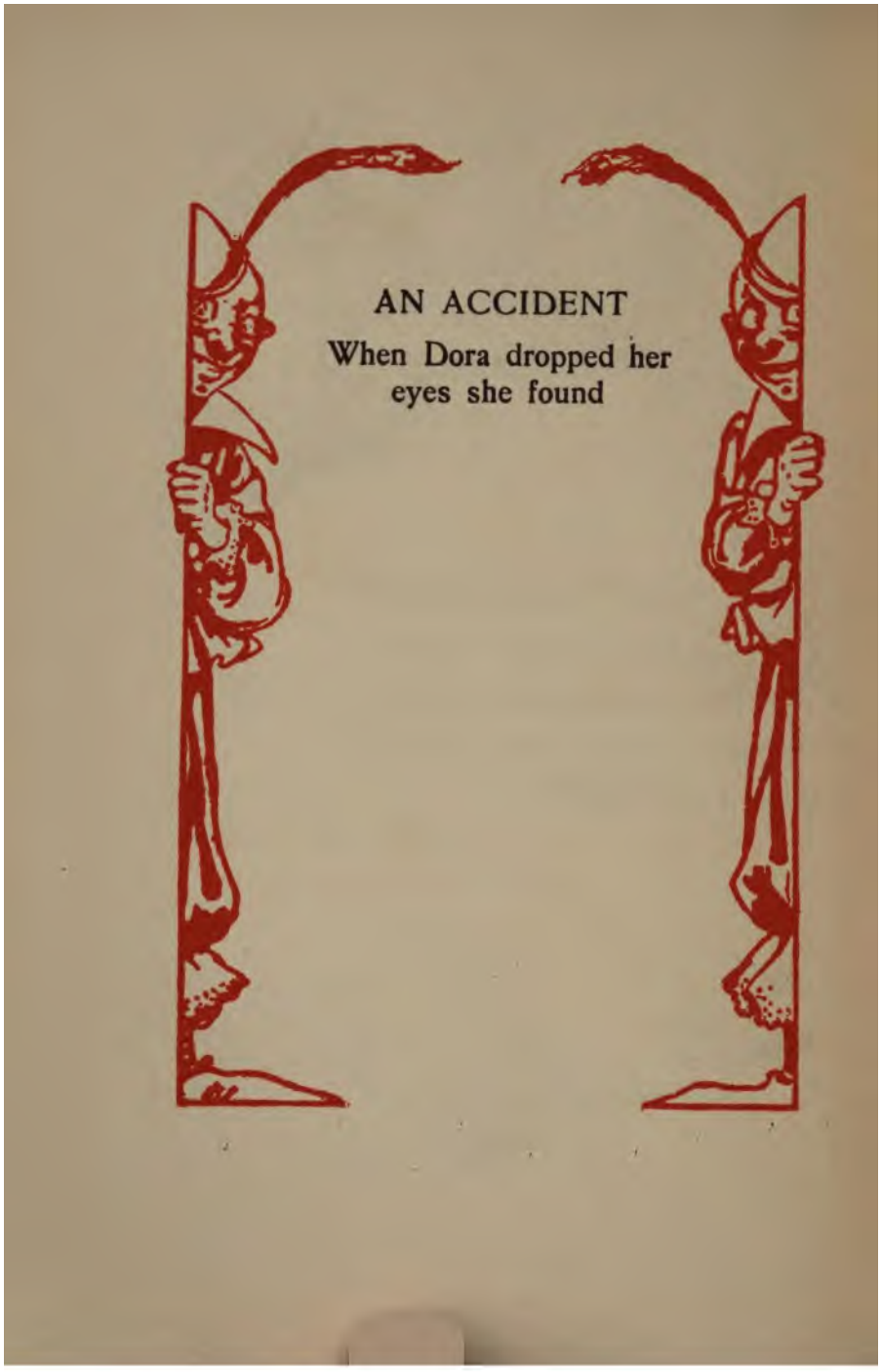
Said, "My name, I admit,
Is a sneeze and a spit,
But thank God it's not Sktschernaskcholvinski."


COMPLIMENTARY
Said the ape to the
ornithorynchus



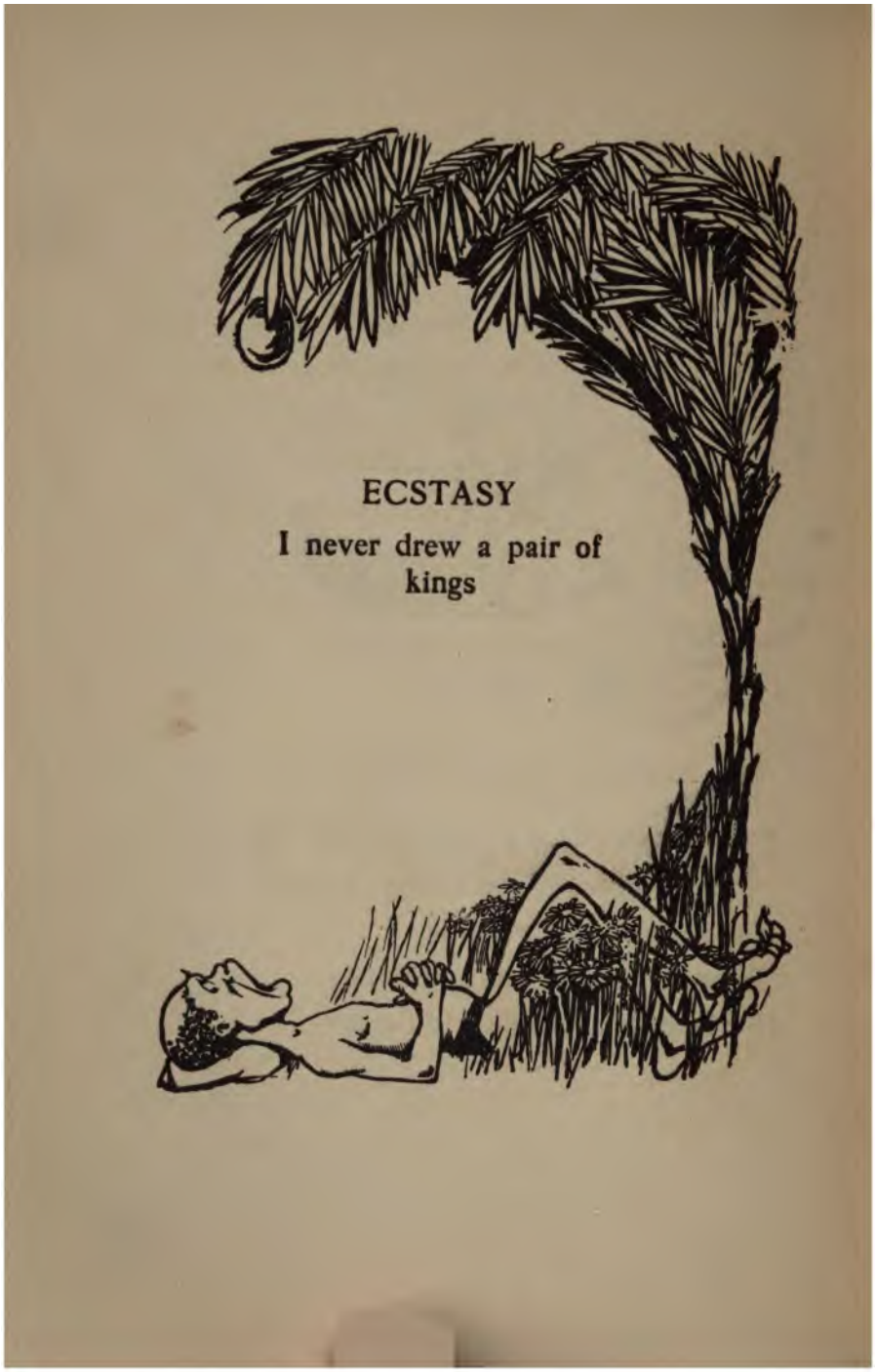
THE PREDATORY PEWEE

A pewee robbed a zebra's nest,
The zebra grieved absurdly;
"Perhaps," she said, "you call it jest—
I think it most unbirdly."


AN ACCIDENT
When Dora dropped her
eyes she found

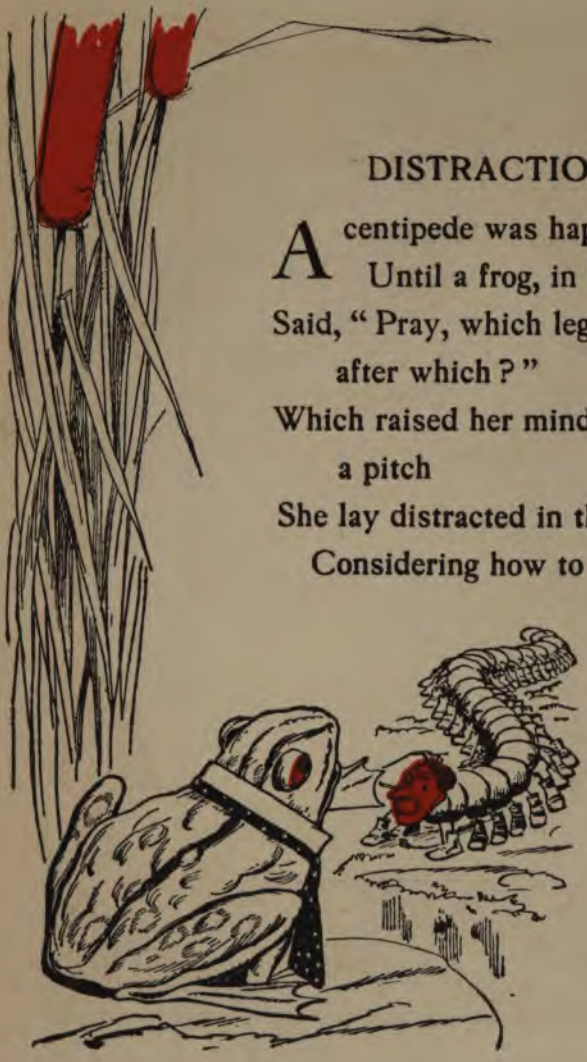
PROCRASTINATION

There was a young man from St. Paul,
Who fell in the spring in the fall :
Had he died in the spring
'Twould have been a good thing ;
But he didn't : he died in the fall.



ECSTASY

I never drew a pair of
kings



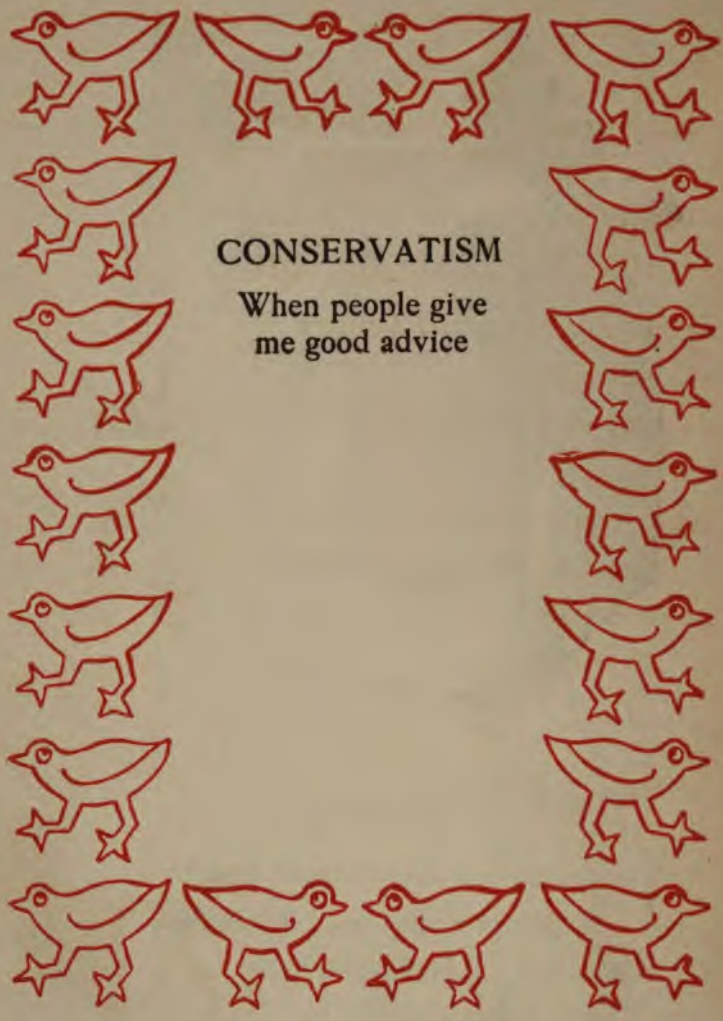
DISTRACTION

A centipede was happy quite,
Until a frog, in fun,
Said, "Pray, which leg comes
after which?"
Which raised her mind to such
a pitch
She lay distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run.

RUSHED TO
DEATH
I wish I had time
to grow old

FEELING

In tradition of artists there lingers
A tale of a lady named Mingers,
Who said, "Feeling—of art
Is the very first part"—
So she dabbed on the paint with her fingers.


CONSERVATISM
When people give
me good advice

JEMIMA'S INDISPOSITION

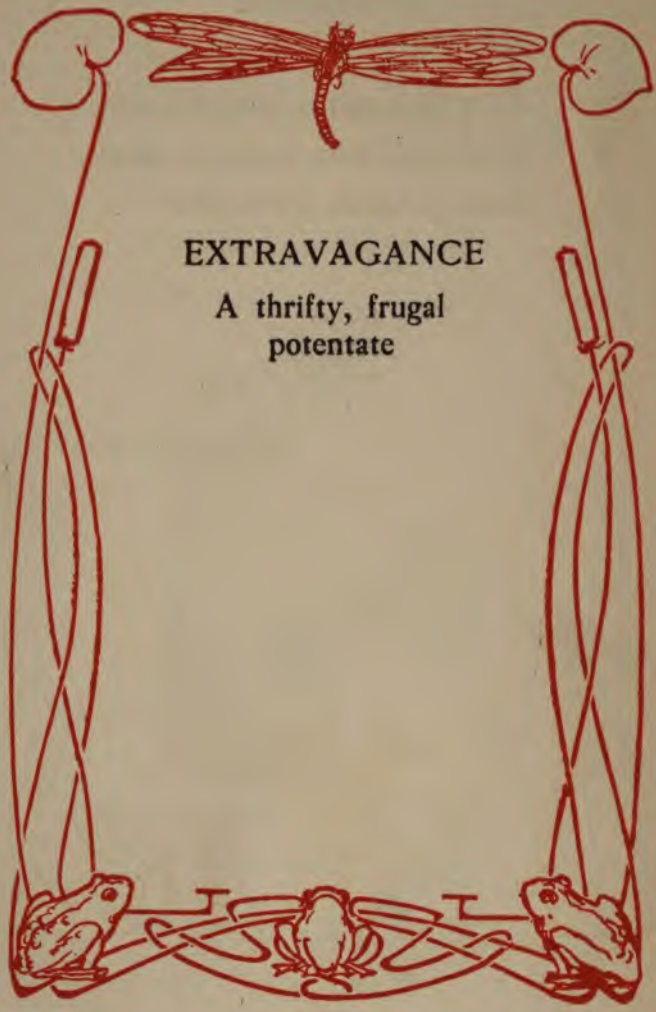
Jemima ate jam, and Jemima
ate jelly,
Jemima went home with a pain
in her——
Now don't be alarmed, and
don't be misled,
Jemima went home with a pain
in her head.

IMPERTURBABILITY

That tired feeling, Archibald

DISTRUST

I hate to use a folding bed,
Because I've oft been told,
That many little lambkins have
Been gathered in the fold.

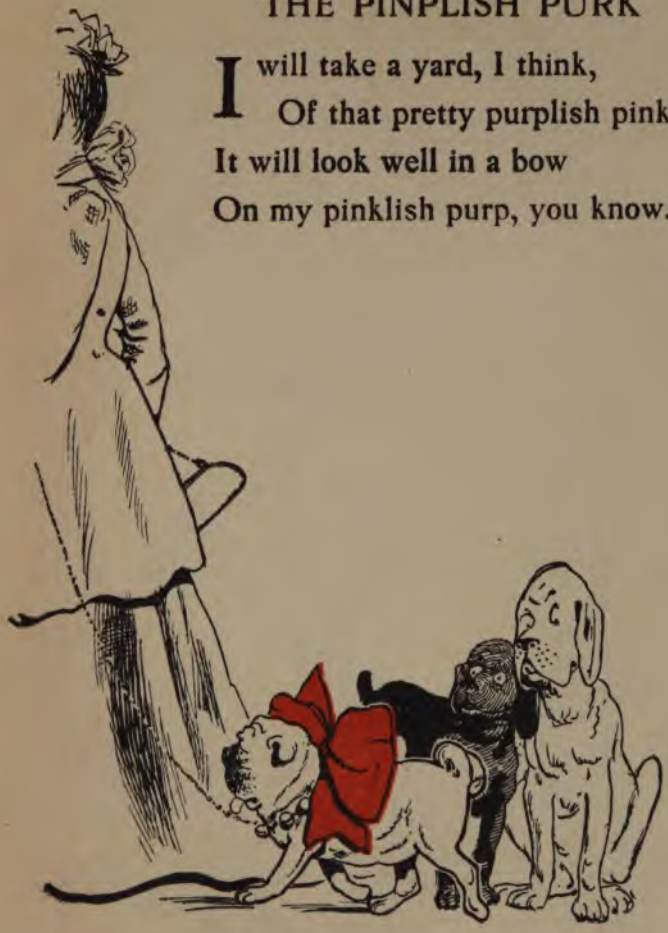


EXTRAVAGANCE

A thrifty, frugal
potentate

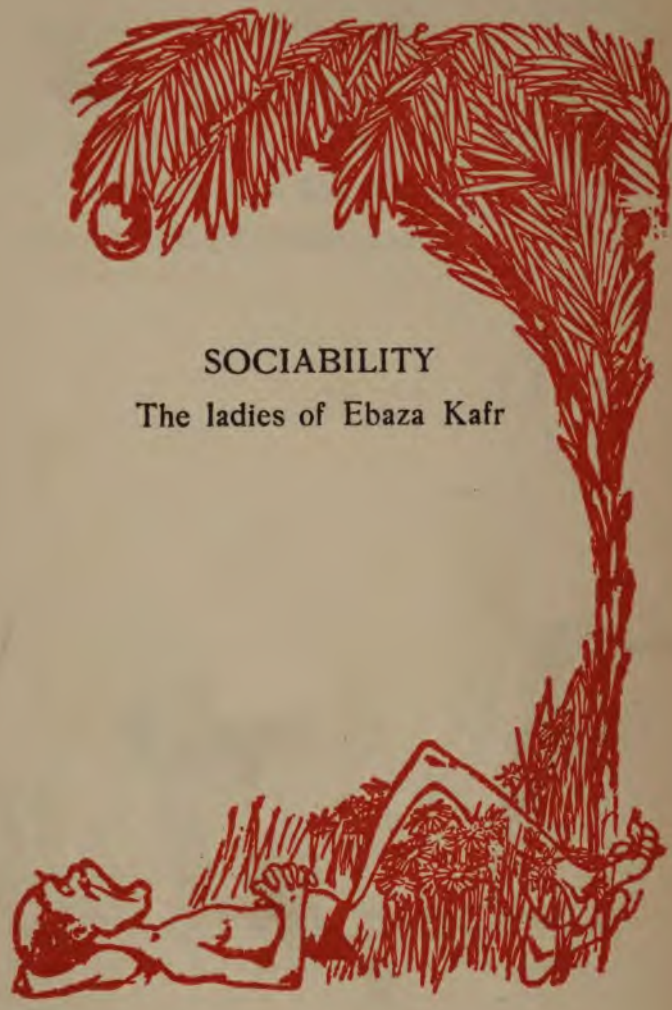
THE PINPLISH PURK

I will take a yard, I think,
Of that pretty purplish pink;
It will look well in a bow
On my pinklish purp, you know.



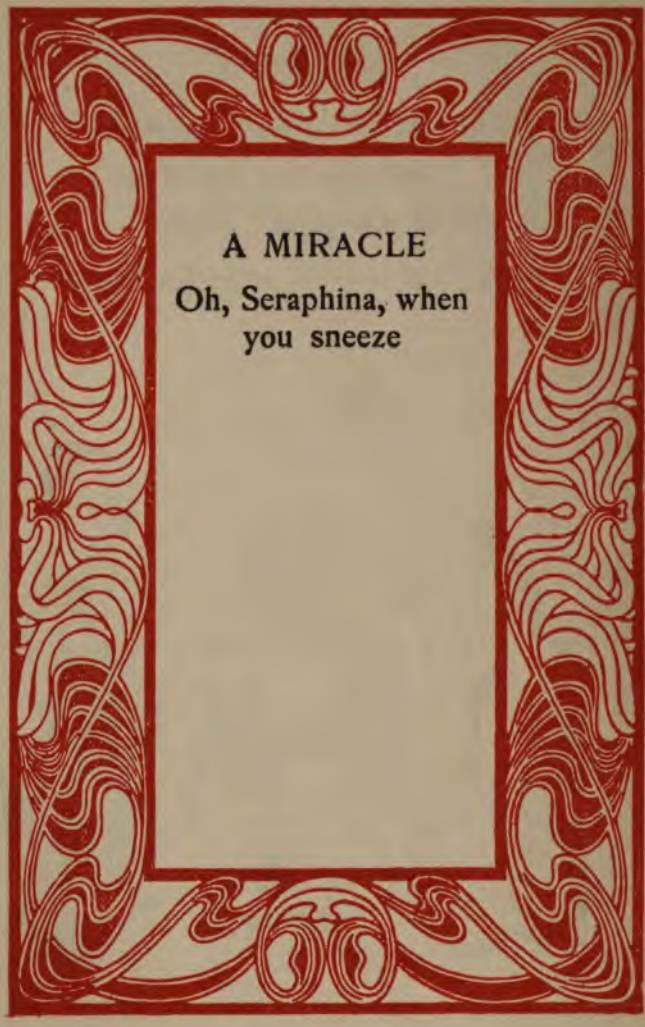
SOCIABILITY

The ladies of Ebaza Kafr



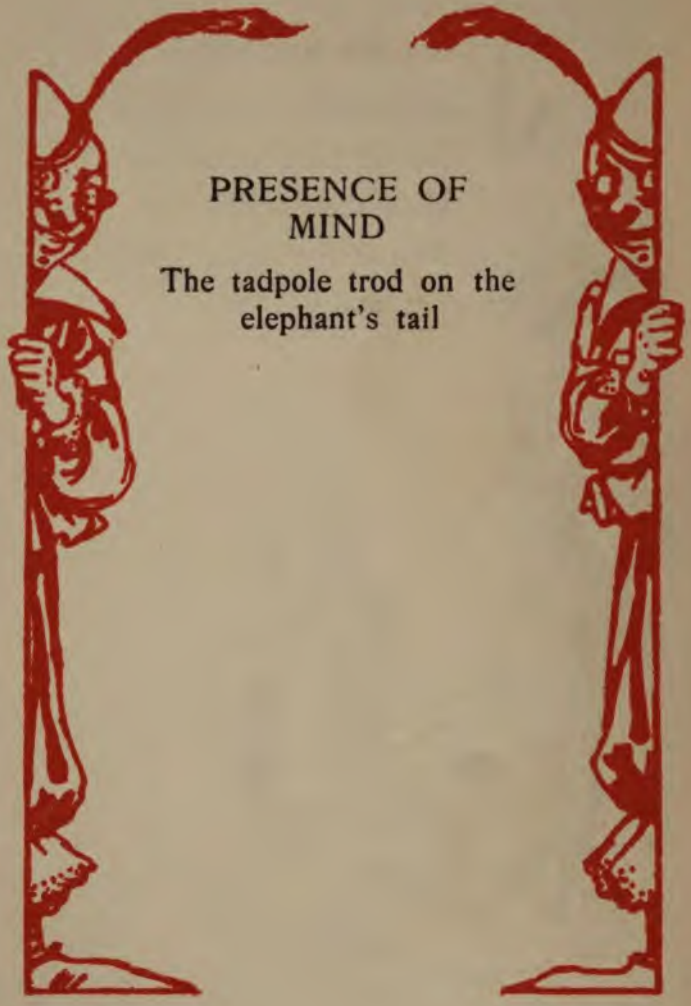
CROWDED

"Will you, Mr. Jones," said she,
"Join me in a cup of tea?"
"I should be delighted," quoth
Jones, "but is there room for both?"


A MIRACLE
Oh, Seraphina, when
you sneeze

SO PLAYFUL.

Merry, laughing, little Moses
Cut off both his brothers' noses,
Made them look so very queer
That mother said, "Why, Moses,
dear!"

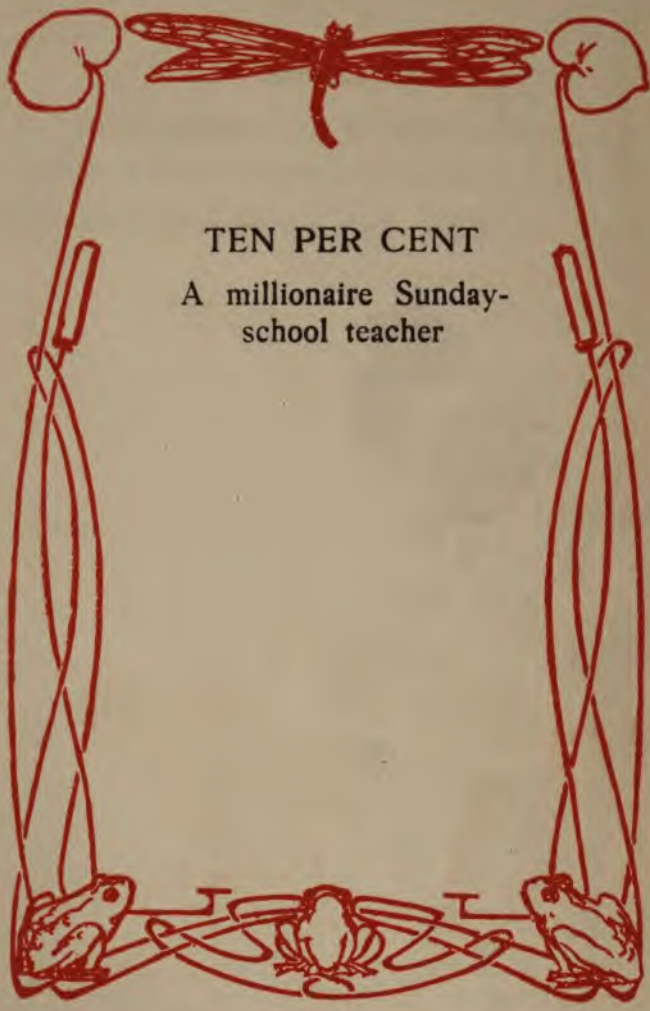


PRESENCE OF MIND

The tadpole trod on the elephant's tail

STICKY

Pretty, idle little Lou
Ate up all her papa's glue.
"Now," said mamma with a smile,
"She'll stick at something for a while."

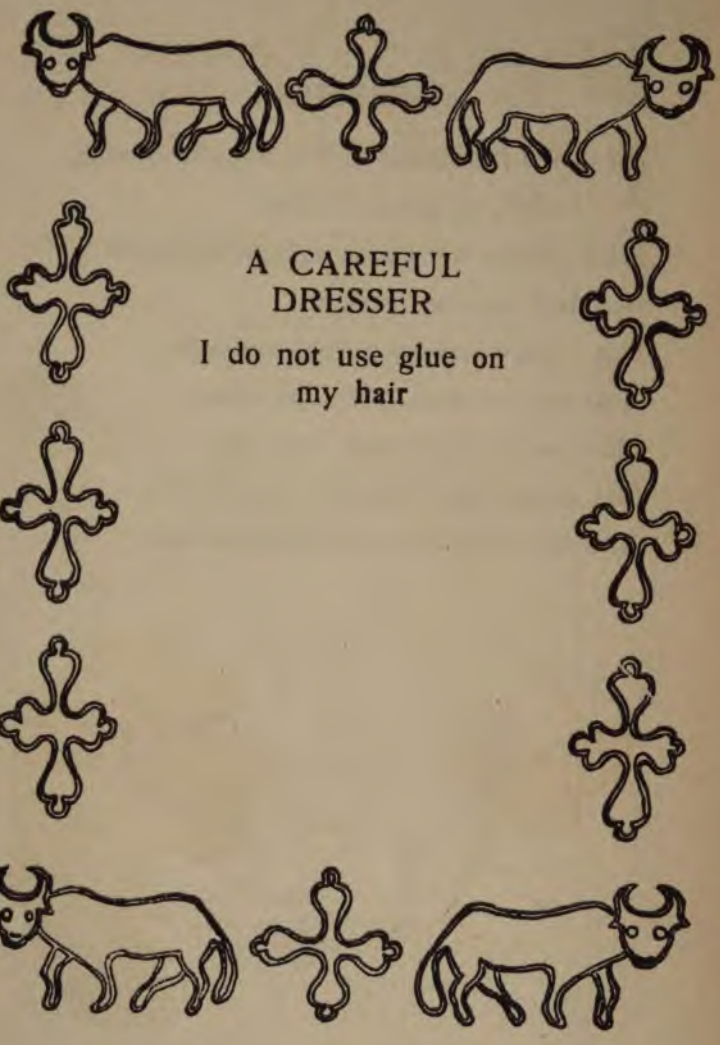


TEN PER CENT

A millionaire Sunday-school teacher

NEATNESS

If down his throat a man should choose,
In fun, to jump or slide,
He'd scrape his shoes against his teeth,
Nor soil his own inside.
But if his teeth were lost and gone,
And not a stump to scrape upon,
He'd see at once how very pat
His tongue lay there by way of mat,
And he would wipe his feet on that!



A CAREFUL DRESSER

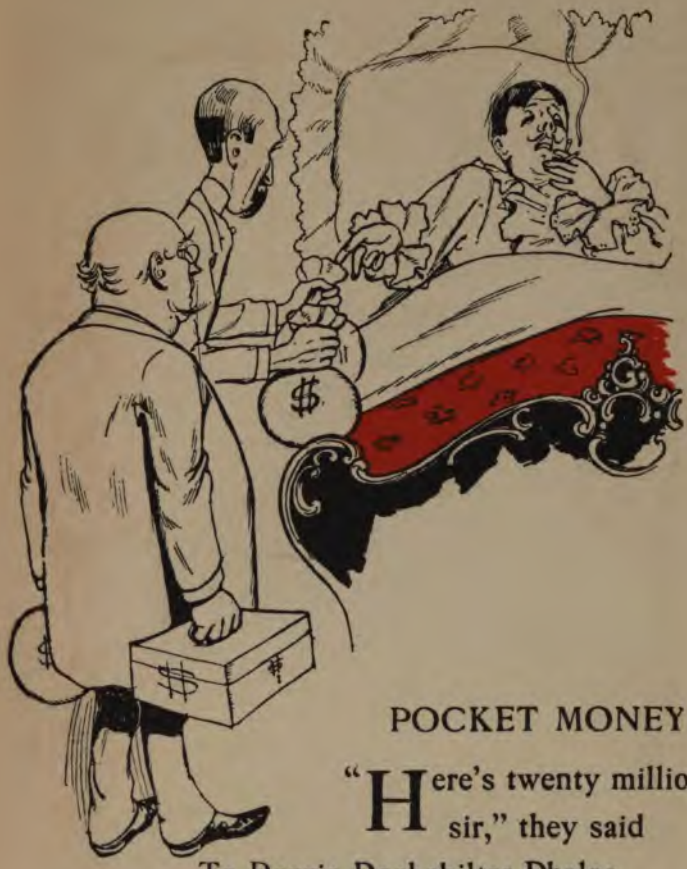
I do not use glue on
my hair

A DILEMMA

I'm sorry I bought all these eggs,
For my cow's lost the use of its legs—
So I really must ask it
To get in my basket,
Though I seldom mix cows with my eggs.

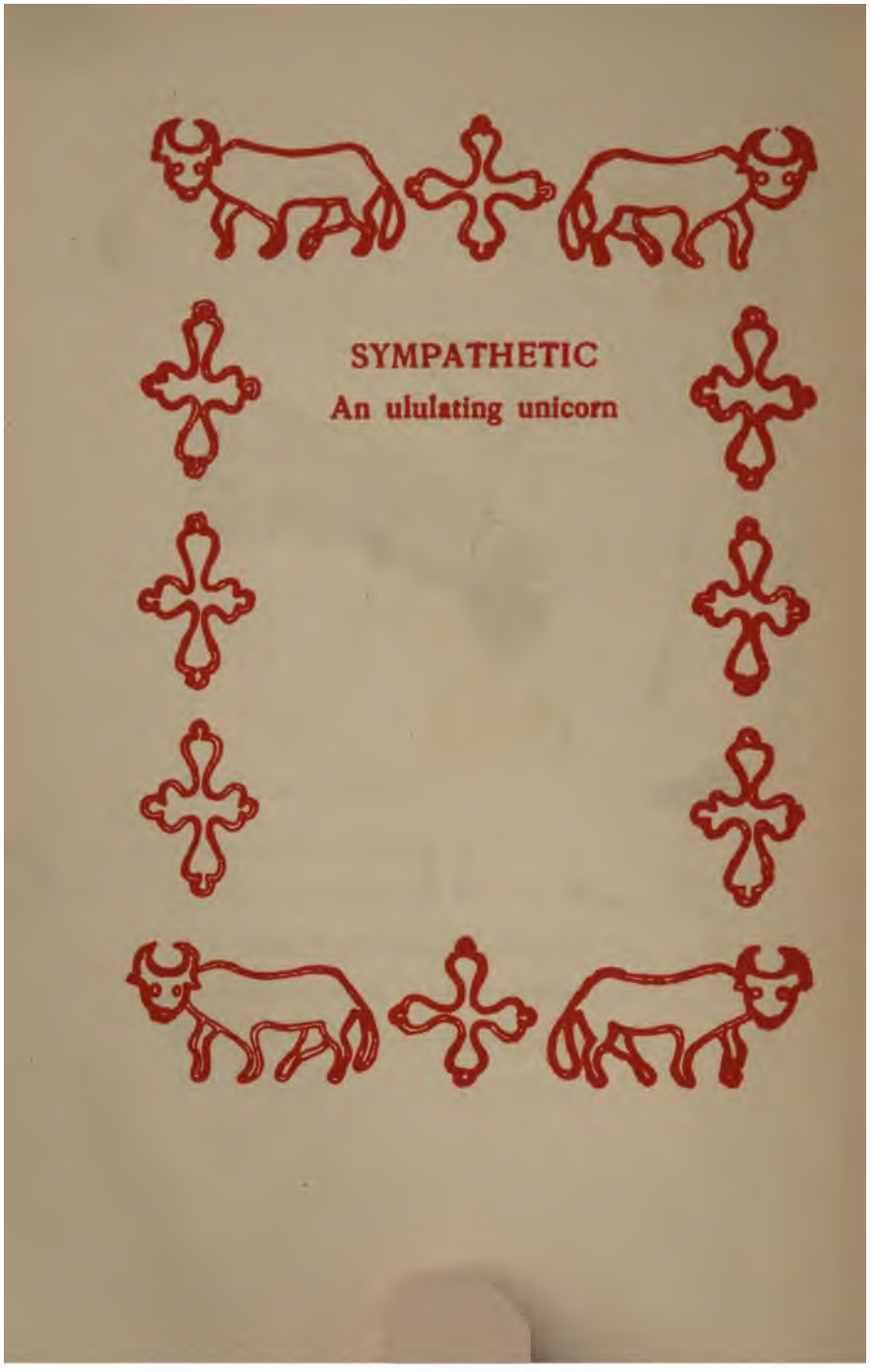
GOOD AS NEW

Though Arthur was all
broken up



POCKET MONEY

"Here's twenty millions, sir," they said
To Reggie Rockabilter Phelps.
"Aw thanks, just lay it on the bed,"
Yawned Reggie, "every little helps!"


SYMPATHETIC
An ululating unicorn

BOTH USEFUL

Those are not cows beside the fence;
They're only calves. Remember, Nelly,
This quite important difference—
The cows give milk, and calves give jelly.

A CAUTION

Don't put the pickles
in your purse